

SOME OBSERVATIONS

On a BOOK intitled

An ESSAY, &c.

In the course of which the Lord Bishop of *London's Comparison* of the more sure Word of Prophecy, &c. is defended against the Objections made to it by the Reverend Messieurs *Ashton* and *Cooke*, Fellows of *Eton-College*; and their several Solutions examin'd,

In a Letter to a Country-Schoolmaster,

PART the FIRST.

In which is shewn,

- I. That the three Particulars to which this Author has objected in Mr. *Ashton's* Interpretation, are *not peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton's*, but *common* to the Bishop of *London's* with Mr. *Ashton's*.
- II. That the Opinions which he declares for and against are equally both, and each sufficiently, defensible in those three respects, notwithstanding the Force of the Objections which he so dextrously levell'd at one, but which, unfortunately, fell foul on the other.
- III. That the *Impropriety of a Comparison*, in any view, between Miracle and Prophecy, in this Instance, is made more apparent by this Author's manner of endeavouring to evade it. Under which Head what has been said by the Reverend Mr. *Jackson* and Mr. *Whitaker*, on that point, is consider'd.
- IV. Some other Objections to Mr. *Ashton's* Interpretation are remov'd, and some Considerations offer'd to support the Probability of the Truth of that Interpretation.

If some more sober Critic come abroad,

If wrong, I smile; if right, I kiss the Rod. Pope Ep.

By a late ^{Mr Ashton} Fellow of *King's-College, Cambridge.*

L O N D O N:

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Advertisement to the Reader.

I Refer thee to the Book on which these Observations are founded for a *Comment*, and an *Apology*, if some things in the course of 'em shall appear to thee to stand in need of either, or of both. If the dictatorial Manner, the peculiar Stile, the inconclusive Reasonings, the *invidious Insinuations*, the *arrogant Humility* and *self-sufficient Condescension* of that Author will not be my Excuse for the Freedom with which I have treated him, I frankly own that I have no other to offer.

In one thing I am really concern'd, and in that only, that I should be unfortunate enough to dissent on any point from the Sentiment of that discerning Prelate, whose Authority of itself would outweigh the Force of any Argument I can offer. Whose Works want the least Defence, and who is most able to defend them if they did. Whose *single Error* (if yet it be an Error) was so venial,

Ignoscenda, quidem, scirent si ignoscere MANES,

And hid under so many Excellencies, that

Non veniam scriptis sed Honorem & præmia!

I speak, however, with the less Diffidence in this respect, because I have that high Opinion of the Greatness of his Lordship's Mind, as well as of his other eminent Qualities, that I can no more think him capable of taking any *Offence* at one Person's fairly inquiring whether the Apostle's Sense corresponds in all

points with his Interpretation, than of receiving any *Pleasure* from another Person's inconsistently making a shew of defending his Sentiment, while he *objects* at the same time to three particulars, against which no just Exception can be made, in the *Sentiment* he *defends*. And I honestly declare that I set out in this Inquiry, with the strongest Expectation from his Lordship's high Authority, that any Objection to his Opinion must be founded on Mistake; with no shadow of a Presumption to the contrary, but that which arose naturally from this Author's unfortunate Judgment: Who, as he has thought fit to object to *three* things in that Opinion which are *liable to no Objection*, may possibly have been led, by the same fatality, to defend *One* which may not be *altogether* so *unexceptionable*.

February 8, 1752.



Dear



Dear S I R,

IN obedience to your Request, which will always have the force of a Command with me, I send you some Observations on a Book, intituled, *An Essay towards ascertaining the Sense of the much controverted Passage in St. Peter's Second Epistle, from the 16th Verse to the end of the First Chapter, by a Critical Discussion of the whole. In a Letter to a Man of Quality. In the course of which the Lord Bishop of London's Comparison of the more sure Word of Prophecy, &c. is defended against the Objections made to it by the Reverend Messieurs Ashton and Cooke, Fellows of Eton-College; and their several Solutions examin'd. By a late Fellow-Commoner of St. John's College, Cambridge.*

I find you have had an extraordinary Character of this Work; and seem particularly to regret, on this very Account, the want of Opportunity, from your daily Engagements in Business of another nature, to attend sufficiently to Debates of this kind, to form a just Judgment of the Reasonings on either side of the Question.

I cannot deny that the Book, and the Author of it, have been excellently well spoken of: The Author, as "a Person of too great a Mind to make a Sacrifice of Truth to views of Interest, or to the lower Motives of Envy:" As "one who has long conceiv'd an Indignation against so sacred a thing as Scripture being prostituted to the idle, vague Method of conjectural Interpretation." The Book, as "the only sure Method of Interpretation." As "exhibiting an Explication of a very obscure Passage in so clear a light that one is astonish'd to find that it has not been done before, till one recollects that it has never been consider'd in the same manner before." As "an Explication not before dreamt off by any Commentator." As "a Specimen of the use of neglected Criticism, towards, at once, evincing the Insufficiency of *all* Interpretations of Scripture, which do not proceed on its Principles, and elucidating and ascertaining the meaning of *any* difficult Passage." In short, As a "Work essentially different from, and incomparably preferable to, those it examines;" as "*This* is built on establish'd Rules of Criticism, while *Those* are made up intirely of partial Lights and vague Harangue."

These are all very high Encomiums, and one can make no doubt that the Truth is equal to the Modesty of 'em, as they come, from *One* who must be confess'd to be most intimately acquainted with both, from *the Author himself*.

And though you are hinder'd, as you tell me, by a very laborious, yet an honest, and most useful, if well-conducted, Work, from attending to the Performance of these large Promises, I would by no means have you raise your Ideas too high of the Pleasures you lose in being debarr'd from diving into the bottom of this Inquiry; for notwithstanding

withstanding that this Gentleman professes to have *made the most of his time* in this Composition, in P. 1. order to *make the less of his Pain*, I make some question whether the courteous Reader, if he enter upon it with the same Expectation, will be fortunate enough to find the same good effect from the perusal.

I have, myself, you are sensible, been no Stranger to Suffering, nor un-acquainted with Pain; with Pain so exquisite and un-intermitting as, I hope, this Gentleman, in his late Confinement, never felt, as, I wish, in any future one, he may never feel: Yet could I never find that any Explication of the most obscure Passages in the Oracles of God was capable of affording a Relief comparable to that which is at hand in the plainest Pages of 'em. Far from allowing myself, in such Circumstances, to pry into the mysterious Glories of his *Throne*, I was weak enough to fancy, that I made *much more of my time* by prostrating myself, with adoration, at his *Footstool*. Ibid;

I have found a time, however, to try this Gentleman's Prescription: and after having read his Book with all the Attention I shall ever think P. 2. due to whatever comes from any one who has been in any manner connected with a Society eminent for its Acuteness, amongst the Seminaries of Learning, to a Proverb, I can honestly declare to you, that I do not find myself, in the least, reliev'd by it from the *Head-Ach*. This I suggest to you, for your Comfort, who, being oblig'd to go abroad daily, seem anxious at the want of an Opportunity to follow the Prescription.

One thing in this Author is, I think, unpardonable: That, not content with the quiet possession of that greater Portion of Sagacity, and better acquaintance with Scriptural Terms which P. 170; Providence, concurring with his own happy En- 174.

Vid. p. 2.
& passim.

deavours, has, so profusely, pour'd into his Lap ; he is for ever treating those, whose humbler Endowments and Acquisitions, have thrown them so far below his Flight, with a Contempt, which it had been but common Charity in him to have dissembled a little, if he had found himself unable, entirely, to suppress it.

P. 30.

You find him, at every turn, reproaching one of the two Gentlemen he has selected for the Heroes of his Dunciad, with the *Gaiety* and *Elegance* of his Stile, and with the *entertaining* manner of his Writing. This is not quite good-natur'd. For though we allow these Weaknesses to be an Abomination to a *Critic*, and are far from suspecting that we shall ever be able to return the Reproach on a Person of his *profound* Erudition, yet secure as he may fancy himself, or I may conceive him, to be on this Side, he should not forget that there is an Error on the other, into which many a learned Man before him has fallen, with which some People may be pleas'd as little, or, perhaps, *entertain'd* as much.

Est huic diversum vitio vitium ; propè majus !

It is not a Happiness to be hop'd for by *every* Man, nor, therefore, to be expected from *all*, to comprehend with the discerning Spirit of an *Abo-liab*, or a *Bezaleel*, the whole Ties and Bearings of the Tabernacle ; but, sure, you will not deny some small share of Praise to the *mechanic* Hand that twists the Silk, or melts the Gold : And while this able Artift is intent upon animating the Statue, why should he detract from the inferior, 'tis true, but equally necessary, Skill of forming a Nail, or finishing a Hair ?

The wise Disposer of Nature, who formed the Thistle as well as the Rose, who made *one* Star to differ

differ from *another Star* in Glory, has given Gifts to the Individuals of the Animal and Intellectual World, with a *various Hand*; and, having giv'n, as he pleas'd, to *all*, *he* upbraideth *none*, with the *want* of Powers which he has not bestow'd, or with the *meanness* of those well he has; but rejoices in the happy Harmony which results from the *agreeing Diversity* of his Works: *He* expects not from the *Hare* the Strength of the *Lion*; nor from the *Elephant* the Swiftnefs of the *Roe*: And if he has blest'd this *all-accomplish'd* Gentleman with the *Lynx's* Beam, enabling him to descry the end of Things from their beginning, and run from Principles, through Inferences, to his Point, in a Series of well-connected Reasoning, by *establish'd Rules* of Criticism; let him adorn himself with *one more* Accomplishment, more properly *his own*, a *modest Complacency* in the Powers by which he is made to excel; and *socially shew the way* to him whose more contracted Sight will allow him only to see Things in *partial Lights*, and discourse of 'em in *vague Harangue*. P. 171.

And however this Author may be offended at any appearance of Ingenuity, I could never, yet, discover that the *best* of Causes was, at any time, made *worse* by a little of it. Let any one, who has ever had occasion to strengthen his *Belief* by *sifting the Chaff* of the late Writers on the side of *Infidelity*, consider, and say, how much they are indebted, for the execution of all their Artillery, not to Christianity, which, being heavenly-temper'd, is proof against it all, but to the *awkward Solemnity* of those who, with a better *Intention* than *Address*, have embarrass'd the Cause they were willing to support. And let me ask this very Author, if he does not consider it as an accessional Proof of the *Divinity of our precious Faith*,

Faith, that it still shines through the *Obscurity* of its *Explications*, and does not yet sink under the *Dullness* of its *Defenders*!

1 Kings
18, 26.

But, by leave of this awful Critic, I would be glad to know by what Authority he forbids the Banns between *Truth* and a *cheerful Countenance*? I am sure, that some who have born the Commission of God, and who, at least, are *mightier than he is*, would have brought *no such Accusation* against the lowest of their Fellow-Labourers. I am in fear for the good Prophet, how he will escape the Censure, when, in the *Gaiety of his Stile*, he *mock'd* the Votaries of *Baal*, and said to this effect. " You certainly speak too low :
" Call louder : For you can have no doubt of
" his Divinity : 'Tis possible he may be engag'd
" in some Conversation of importance ; or, so
" intent upon the pursuit of his Enemies, that
" he is not just now at leisure to attend to the
" request of his Friends. Perhaps he may be set
" out for his Country-Seat ! or has sat up late last
" Night, and his Servant may have forgot to
" wake him ! "

There are some Things so self-evidently ridiculous, that you cannot make them more so by *any Medium*, and which, for that Reason, will hardly admit of a *grave* Confutation. And the Absurdity in this very Instance, was of such a sort, that the Representative of God himself saw no better way to proceed in answer to it, than by entering into the very Spirit of their Error and seeming to allow it. And this, sure, was a *serious* Subject. For the Point in controversy was nothing less than the *Supremacy* of the God of *Israel* ! And need I appeal to the Event, whether this *acute* Reasoner could have succeeded better by the best of his establish'd Rules ? Nay, have not millions felt the force of this *gay Address*,

who

who would have been incapable of receiving the least impression from the most *grave*, the most abstruse metaphysical Arguments on the Infinity, the Independence, and the Unity of GOD!

Nature, as I hinted before, has arm'd all its Creatures with some, and most of 'em with different Weapons of Defence. And it is the *Privilege* of each to make use of the *peculiar* he finds himself in possession of. For the *Use* is pointed out by the *Gift*. If Things were to take *another turn*, what wild Work should we see! The Child would lead the Bull by the Horns which affected to *kick with its Heels*! and who would be afraid of being gor'd by the *innocent Ears* of an Ass? 'Tis best, perhaps, to pursue the direction of Nature. And while our Author is preparing his *Blunderbuss*, I may, possibly, be able to do some useful Mischief or other, with the *Small-Sword*.

Vid. *infra*.

I can see, too, that he is not averse, now and then, to sew on a Patch of a *gaier* Colour, when it comes in his way, upon the *darker Ground* of his Critical Discussion. And though one would imagine when he marshals his Miracle and Prophecy, his Miracles and Prophecies, his *the* Miracle and *the* Prophecy; when he pours forth his *Postulatum*, his *Prosopopœia*, his *Epoch*, his *traletitious Senses*, and his *authenticating Prediction into Prophecy*, that he had been always chain'd down, in learned Dust, with his Folios, to the Library of a College; yet when he begins to talk of the *Enchantress Pleasure*, of the *Charms of dear Novelty*, of *enveloping and developing*, of *eclaircising the Place by eclaircising the Expression*, of the Reverend Messieurs ASHTON and COOKE, and, particularly, of that *dry Desert* the *Red-Sea*, he seems to be in a disposition himself to shake off *the Trammels* of Criticism, and to drop the Scholar for a while in the Gentleman *à la mode*! He,

P. 171.

P. 169. He, very justly, observes that the only way of guarding against the almost imperceptible infatuation of being partial to *our own* Productions, is to examine the Propriety of them with the same strictness we do *another's*; and this, he adds, has not been wanting, in his Case. And yet, though he thinks it something extraordinary, that within a very little time, we should have *two* Explications of this Passage, *both* differing from *my Lord of London's* and from each other, he seems not to be sensible of any thing extraordinary (so little does he know himself) in our having *a third* in a very little time after, which differs from all the rest!

P. 41. But what is still worse, this Gentleman (whose *Candor*, it seems, can sometimes *sleep* as well as his *Judgment*) not content with the Apology (to which he has yet no Objection) which Mr. *Ashton* had made in his Advertisement, for *running counter to the great Names* from which he thought himself *oblig'd to dissent*, has found great matter of Offence in the very same Page, in which he expresses his *Approbation* of *that Excuse*, in these unfortunate Words: "*Dr. Sherlock, the present Bishop of London, in the first of his admired Discourses.*" I own I am at a loss to find where the Crime lies which this Gentleman's Sagacity has smelt out. Where can be the impropriety of considering a Prelate of the greatest Eminence rather in the *amiable* Light of an *Overseer* of the Flock, than in the more *invidious* one of a *Lord* of the Heritage? *St. Peter* would have taught him better. — Or as *the present Bishop* of *one See*, when he had so *lately* presided over *another*! Or what shadow of Disrespect can he trace in the mention of *a Name*, which carries more real Honor in it than *any Title*! *A Name*, which will be honour'd 'till to *live* and *die* be no longer

longer Subjects worthy the *Attention* of a Man : 'till *Prophecy itself* shall cease to support the *Hope* of a Christian. And what would even *this curious Speaker* say more of any *human Composition*, than that it attracts the *admiration* of *Men*.

Such Cavils as these shew, indeed, abundantly the *Disposition* of their Author ; they add *no weight* to the Cause which finds 'em necessary to its support ! Let us wave therefore all this Business of *idle* Insinuation, which is foreign to the purpose of all *equitable* Inquiry, *unnecessary* to him who brings Proof, and *useless* to him who has none to bring.

If the Description giv'n of Prophecy in the Dissertation be, at all, uneasy to this Gentleman, I must take the liberty to tell him, that it is *not* Mr. *Ashton's*, but the description of *one*, who, by the singular Piety, and Benevolence of his Heart, and by the uncommon Force and Accuracy of his Writings, has done as much service to the Cause of Truth, (without disparagement to any Man,) as any other, that I know of, since the Days of Inspiration ; I mean, *Dr. Butler, the present Bishop of Durham, in his well-known Analogy.*†

But I hasten to the Conclusion of this tedious Preface, after I have said a few more *last Words* to you, which shall be, indeed, the last. Upon what establish'd Rules of *Criticism* he has form'd his Plan, I know not. *One of Common-sense* I could venture to recommend to him, which might once have been of more service to him than all the rest, and it is a very *short* and *plain* one, viz. " Only, to be sure *what* any one's Opinion *is*, before he sits down to write *for or against* it." The observance of this single Rule, I dare say, would have sav'd him much *unnecessary Trouble*, to which he has put himself during his Month's Confinement, when a little more *Rest* might perhaps have done better for him ; and

† Butler's Anal. Ed. Quart. p. 258.

the neglect of it has, you will soon see, run him upon a fatal Rock, while he *opposes* the Sentiment he *would defend*, and *declares for* that which he *meant to oppose* !

P. 7. I come now to *his Arguments*, which I will examine fairly as they lie ; and I promise you, once for all, that the *worst Words* he shall have from me, shall be *his own*. And he has giv'n his Honor, that he will take all kindly that comes, *ex ore suo*. And if it should happen, by any untoward concurrence of Circumstances, that you shall, now and then, find a strong tendency in yourself to relax the severity of your Brow ; If a Smile should steal from you, before you are aware, upon a serious Subject, I hope, you will think it, at least, as *pardonable a Provocation* in me, as if I had laid you under the *heavy Necessity* of sleeping over my Remarks ; and even this Merit I will ingenuously transfer from myself to him whose Arguments are so happily constituted, that there needs little more than the bare repetition of 'em to furnish most ample matter for your Entertainment.

His Charge, then, against Mr. *Ashton*, runs thus.

P. 28. " Tis for *This Reason*, as being inconsistent
 " with what *appears to me* to be the Intention of
 " the Passage, that I cannot admit of Mr. *Ashton's*
 " Solution, which supposes the Apostle to
 " be urging, here, the [general] *Evidences* for
 " the coming of Christ, and the same as in the
 " next Chapter. He, *besides*, understands the
 " *We*, in " We have a more sure Word of
 " Prophecy" of *Christians in general*. A Sense
 " which seems as contrary to *all Grammatical*
 " Construction as to the *design* of the Passage ; and
 " applies the other *We's*, which he owns, refer

" to

“ to the Apostle only, as an Evidence to
 “ Christians in common, in a manner, which
 “ *appears to me*, to say the best, too labour’d,
 “ and not a little *perplex’d*.”

Here are *three* Considerations, you see, laid, by this Author, as a Ground for his not admitting the Solution of the Passage in *St. Peter*, giv’n by Mr. *Ashton*; that is, as he expresses himself more fully in another Place, that part of Mr. *Ashton*’s Solution, or those Assertions *peculiar* to that Author, which *differ* from what *appears to him* to be the *true one*. First, That Mr. *Ashton* supposes the Apostle to be here (in the controverted Passage) urging [*the general*] *Evidences* of Christ’s coming again in Glory, and the same as in the next Chapter. The Second, That *he* understands the *We*, in “ *We* have a more sure Word of Prophecy,” of *Christians in general*. The Third, That *he* applies the other *We*’s, which he owns refer to the Apostle only, as an Evidence to Christians in common. P. 50.

Here are *three* Reasons likewise assign’d by him, for his entering his Protest against these *three* Suppositions. That the first is inconsistent with what *appears to him* to be the Intention of the Passage. That the Second is a Sense which seems as contrary to *all Grammatical Construction*, as to the *Design* of the Passage. And that the Third *appears to him*, to say the best, too labour’d, and not a little *perplex’d*.

I. Before we enter into the Merits of these several Objections, it claims to be observ’d, That of the *three* Considerations upon which this Author grounds his dissent from Mr. *Ashton*’s Solution, there is *not one* which is *peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton*, but each of ’em common to the Bishop of *London*’s Interpretation with Mr. *Ashton*’s.

- ton's*. And this is the more worthy our Observation, because this Gentleman professes to have read the Discourses with all the Attention which a Work wrote in so masterly a manner naturally engages. Because he undertakes to consider those Passages particularly in Mr. *Ashton*, which *differ* from what *appears to him* to be the *true* Interpretation of *St. Peter*. And, Because he adopts the entire Sentiment of his Lordship so absolutely, without all reservation, as not only to suppose it *may be*, but to assert that it *is* the *true one*, and *his own Sense* too.
- P. 141. And that I may not *assume* any thing, I will give a full, though succinct Proof of *this*, in every one of the *three* Instances he has produc'd.
- P. 50. But, as there is an evident Mistake, to say the best, in the first Article of Charge, it may be proper to state that Matter as it really stands in the Dissertation before we proceed to the Proof of these Particulars. In the first Article, then, Mr. *Ashton* stands charg'd with supposing, in his Dissertation, that *St. Peter* is, in the Passage in controversy, urging *the general Evidences* for Christ's coming.—Now by *the general Evidences* of *any Doctrine* of Christianity, I suppose, we mean *the general Evidences* of *Christianity* itself, as a *Divine Revelation*. For every particular Doctrine of Christianity being included in, and deliver'd under the sanction of the, general Revelation, whatever has any tendency to give Credit to the one, will tend, in the same degree, to advance the Credibility of the other. And whoever will give himself the trouble to turn to the Dissertation, may find it expressly said :
- P. 40. " That it is *highly probable*, that the *Proofs of Christianity*, i. e. *the general Evidences* of every one of its Doctrines, and *this* amongst the rest, as they were *not necessary*, were *not intended* in the Epistles of *St. Peter*. With
- P. 168.
- P. 29.
- P. 112.

With what shew of *Truth*, then, with what colour of *Fairness* can it be asserted, “ That Mr. *Ashton* supposes, here, the Apostle to be urging *the general Evidences* for Christ’s Coming again? ”

Rejecting, therefore, what is *not just*, what is contrary to Mr. *Ashton*’s declar’d Meaning, in this Charge, we will proceed to what is *fair* in it, and what, he will not deny that he meant. And all that can be, *fairly*, charg’d upon Mr. *Ashton* is, “ That he does suppose *some Evidences* of Christ’s Coming again *in Glory*, to be contain’d in the Passage.”

This being settled, and allowed, we go on to our Proofs, which we begin by shewing, 1. First, That it is *not peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton*’s Solution, but *common to his with his Lordship*’s, to suppose the Apostle to be urging, here, *some Evidences, some Proofs*, for the Coming of Christ. “ With-
“ out all Question, says that admirable Writer,
“ the Words of the Text, according to their
“ *most natural Meaning*, do imply, that the Evi-
“ *dence of Prophecy is a surer Evidence* than that
“ mentioned before, which was, &c.—“ But
“ they who conclude from hence, that Prophecy
“ is a *better Evidence for the Mission of Christ*, &c.
“ draw a Conclusion which the Text will not
“ justify —“ For the *main Point* which St. Peter
“ *endeavours to establish* is, not the Mission of
“ Christ, but *his Coming in Glory*. To prove this
“ *Point*, the Apostle tells them, that he had been
“ an Eye-witness, &c.”

From hence it appears, That his Lordship makes *no Question* that St. Peter’s *Intention*, according to the *most natural Sense* of the Words, was to urge Prophecy as an *Evidence*, as a *surer Evidence*, than something else, for the *main Point* which he *endeavours to establish* in his Epistles.

B

Now

P. 13.
Disc. 1.

P. 20.

P. 220

P. 54.

Now the obvious Sense of establishing any Doctrine by Arguments, this Gentleman is of Opinion, is to give as conclusive a *Proof* as can be giv'n of it. And his Lordship adds, that to *prove this main Point*, which he first discern'd to be the coming of Christ, the Apostle introduc'd the Passage in controversy.

After *this* we hope this Gentleman will *retract this part* of his Charge against Mr. *Ashton*, as if it were *peculiar to him* alone to consider the Apostle as urging here the *Evidences* for Christ's Coming, which we have now shewn to have been so explicitly done by so high an Authority as the Bishop of *London*.

Again we are to shew, 2. That it is *not peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, but common to his with the Bishop's, to understand the *We* in "We have a more sure Word of Prophecy" of *Christians in general*.

Disc. 1.
P. 11.

In answer to an Interpretation of the Passage which supposes Prophecy, here, to be call'd by St. *Peter*, a more sure Word than the Miracle, in the Opinion only of the *Jews*, who had strong Prejudices in favour of their own Prophets, his Lordship has these remarkable Words, to our present Purpose. "Whatever the *Jews* might think, St. *Peter* could not think Prophecy, &c. "and could not therefore join himself in the same Opinion with his Countrymen. For the Words "are *We*," allowing, evidently, that the Persons to whom the Apostle is writing, the *Jewish* Christians, were comprehended in that Expression; and supposing only, that the Apostle in the use of the first Person did not exclude, but join, himself, in opinion with, the Persons to whom he was writing.

This Gentleman cannot, therefore, urge it, with any shadow of Propriety, or of Truth, as a Point

Point *peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, and in which it *differs* from what *appears* to him to be the true one, "That in it the *We* in "We have a more sure Word of Prophecy," is understood of *Christians in general*, since we find it so evidently understood in the same Sense in this short Extract from his Lordship's first Discourse.

Once more it is to be shewn, 3. That it is *not peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, but common to his with his Lordship's, to apply the *We's*, which confessedly relate to the *Apostles only*, as an Evidence to *Christians in general*.

To clear this I shall only need to repeat a part of the Passage I cited before from his Lordship. "To prove this Point the Apostle tells *them*, "That he had been Eye-witness of his Majesty," he produces the "*We* have been Eye-witnesses of his Majesty," and the other *We's* which, by Confession, relate to the *Apostles only*, as an Evidence of the Point in question to *them* — to whom? to the *Christians*, to whom he was writing, *in common*.

Neither must this, then, be produc'd any more by this Gentleman as an Objection that arises *peculiarly* to Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, as it *differs* from what he conceives to be the *true one*, that he applies the *We's*, which are allow'd to relate to the *Apostles alone*, as an Evidence to *Christians in common*. Since it appears from hence, that they are applied by his Lordship to the very same purpose.

It appears, therefore, as I propos'd to prove, That, of the *three* Considerations on which this Author has grounded his dissent from Mr. *Ashton's* Interpretation there, is *not one* that is *peculiar* to Mr. *Ashton's*, but that every One of the Three is common to the Bishop of *London's* with Mr. *Ashton's*.

- P. 67. Now it seems to me to be a very singular Method of proceeding in this Gentleman, when, in the management of his Argument against Mr. *Ashton's* Interpretation, as it differs from the true one, in an Essay, in the course of which he proposes to *defend* the Lord Bishop of *London's* Opinion against the Objections made to it by Mr. *Ashton*, he makes his whole Reasoning turn upon three Cardinal Points, in no one of which there is any thing peculiar to Mr. *Ashton*, but upon every one of which he has subscribed, implicitly, to the Sentiment of his Lordship, which this Gentleman is pleas'd to tell us is *the true one*, and indeed *his own Sense too*. For let us, as this is, the whole of it, no more than a Discussion between Friends, debate it *friendly*, and consider calmly, without any of those stimulating Ideas which are apt to warm even good Men, who are sometimes carried, but ill, to defend the *Principles* of their Religion, by Methods which deviate from its *Practice*; divesting ourselves, I say, of all such *unnatural*, as well as *unprofitable* Sensations, let us consider, coolly, where all those *hard Words* which have been so plenteously bestow'd by this Gentleman upon these *three* Particulars will, fall at last. Supposing the Reasoning to be ever so just, against whom, pray, is the Conclusion? Not against Mr. *Ashton alone*, whose Opinion is in these respects shelter'd under the Authority of his Lordship. Not upon his Lordship *singly*, because this Gentleman has adopted his Lordship's Opinion *for his own*, and acknowledg'd it as *the true one*. Against *whom*, then, but *himself*?
- Tit. Pag.
- P. 6.
- Ibid.
- P. 30.

Quàm temerè in Nosmet legem sancimus iniquam!

If, in the first of these Instances, there be something which appears to this Gentleman to be *inconsistent* with what he takes to be the *intention* of

of the Passage. — If, in the second, something, more, which seems as contrary to *all Grammatical Construction as to the design of the Passage*. — If, again, an Explication built on the second of these Considerations *must incur Absurdities*, which, indeed, are *so great as to bring a Disgrace on any Solution which depends thereon*. If in the third, there be something, yet, which appears to him, *to say the best*, too labour'd, and *not a little perplex'd*. If all this be so, he will do well to consider what high Compliments he is paying his Lordship in all these Censures upon Mr. *Ashton*, as his Lordship's Solution has been shewn to *depend as much thereon*, as Mr. *Ashton's* does; or rather *what Honours* he is heaping up upon his *own Judgment*, while he spends so much of his *Critical Acrimony* upon an Opinion which he *has espous'd himself*. And how unfortunately has he set out in defending the Bishop against Mr. *Ashton's* Objections, by directing this *keen Encounter of his Wit* against *three Particulars*, upon every one of which it appears, that Mr. *Ashton* is *agreed minutely* with his Lordship.

Compare
P. 52 &
53, with
P. 22, 23,
& 29.

P. 6.

I would be glad to be inform'd by what *establish'd Rule*, by what Statute of Criticism, it is enacted, "That what *may be true* in his Lordship's Interpretation, *must be false* in Mr. *Ashton's*!" From what Principle, of the most *regular Criticism*, will it follow, "That Positions which are *proper* in a Discourse, shall be *absurd* in a Dissertation! How, Suppositions which are fraught with such Absurdities, as to bring a *Disgrace upon any Solution*, can do *any Honour to any*! Upon the Authority of *what Canon* is it, "That the *same Reasonings* shall be so severely *censur'd*, so highly *complimented*, and so expressly *adopted for his own*, by the *same Author*, in the *same Page* of his Book.

P. 171.

P. 172,
173.

P. 29.

- P. 35. From the absolute impropriety of this Gentleman's Reasoning, and the great appearance of Learning in every part of his Essay, your Candour, I know, will suggest, the only thing, I conceive, that can be suggested to extenuate his Error, " That in *so long* a Work (long indeed, in comparison of the *very short* one of *Hypothesis*) an Author has a prescriptive right *to forget himself*. In an ancient institute of Criticism it is written, *Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum*.
- P. 67. But what resource will your Good-nature have,
- P. 66. if *we indulgently* admit this Plea, when it shall appear, that these *three* Objections do not only bear equally hard upon his Lordship's (*i. e.* upon this Gentleman's *own*) Interpretation, as upon Mr. *Ashton's* — as has now been shewn — but that every one of the *three* Reasons, upon which he grounds his three Objections, is *a mere Imagination*, and *concludes nothing*? As I shall now proceed to shew.---How will it turn out to the Credit of this *only true Method* of Criticism, or of this Gentleman's application of it, when we see so
- P. 168. ingenious an Author, with so *unerring* a Guide, so
- P. 174. greatly *entertaining* his Readers with such a *threefold Absurdity* in the very entrance on his Work?
- P. 173.
- P. 2.

*Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus orci,
Gorgones Harpyiaequē, & forma tricorporis umbræ!*
Virg. *Æn.* 6.

- P. 41, II. I will now shew against this Author, " That his Lordship's Opinion, with which Mr. *Ashton's* coincides in every one of the Instances to which he has thought proper to object, stands upon the same foot of Credibility, in each of those Respects, as it did before the *Attack* made
- P. 148. upon it by this *unfortunately learned* Author,
That

That the Absurdities are of *his own creation*, and this *unwieldy Engine of Criticism*, instead of serving the Purposes for which it was invented, has, in the Trial, recoil'd back upon himself !

P. 9.

“ ——— It is the Sport to see the Engineer
 “ Hoist in his own Petard ! and't shall go hard
 “ But I will delve one Yard below his Mine,
 “ And blow him to the Moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet
 “ When in one Line two Crafts directly meet !
Shakespear's Hamlet.

1. It is not impossible, then, I say, but that a Solution may be admitted which supposes the Apostle to be, here, urging *some* Evidences, as his Lordship's and Mr. *Ashton's* do, for the Coming of Christ. And as the *Reason* giv'n by this Author why it is *not possible* to admit such a Solution is, “ That the Supposition is *inconsistent* with what *appears to him* to be the Apostle's *Intention* in the Passage, I shall enquire how far what appears to him to be, *may*, or *may not*, be the *Intention* of the Apostle in the Passage. In order to judge more justly of the force of his Argumentation, we must go back to that part of the Essay where he explains, at large, what appears to him to be the Construction of the whole Epistle, and the particular Reference of its Members, according to Preliminaries settled and adjusted with great critical Exactness in Page the eighth. He begins by a *Proof* (for he has long conceiv'd an Indignation against so sacred a Thing as Scripture being prostituted to the idle, vague, Method of *conjectural* Interpretation,) “ That all *between* the Verses immediately preceding the *Polemic* Passage and the beginning of the third Chapter, is but *one great Parenthesis*, “ into which the Apostle is carried occasionally

P. 40.

P. 20.

P. 2.

P. 55. “ from the mention of his solicitude for *them*,
 “ his Disciples, I suppose, are meant.” The or-
 der of *this Proof* as far as I can understand it, is
 this — “ That there is no Chasm in the Sense.”
 — “ Nothing wanting to make the Connexion
 “ full and complete.” — “ That the “ and there-
 “ fore,” or something like it, which this Gentle-
 “ man has supplied, would have been necessary,
 “ had the Words immediately follow’d one ano-
 “ ther: But there is no room for any such Par-
 “ ticles of Connexion after a *long Parenthesis*,
 “ and there is evidently no Break in the Sense.”
 “ Consequently *all between* is but *one great*
 “ *Parenthesis*.” — “ *All this*, therefore, the six
 “ Verses of the Passage, and the succeeding
 “ Chapter, to which it is connected, consisting
 “ of Twenty-two Verses only, is plainly Paren-
 “ thetic to the course of the Epistle.”

As this is the first Instance in which this Gen-
 tleman has apply’d his *favourite Criterion of Criti-*
 P. 170. *cism*, to ascertain the Sense of the Passage, and
 to found an Explication upon it unknown to *any*
 P. 172. *Commentator*, that useless Tribe of running Wri-
 Ibid. ters, who explain every thing but what wants ex-
 plaining, let us see how far *his Reasoning* here is
certain, and his *Rule* to be *depended upon*!

His *Reasoning* is, “ That as there is no Chasm
 “ in the Sense, nothing wanting to make the Con-
 “ nexion full and complete, between the Verse
 “ immediately preceding this Passage and the
 “ beginning of the third Chapter, and as there
 “ are no Particles of Connexion in the beginning
 “ of that Chapter, for which there is no room
 “ after a long Parenthesis, but which are neces-
 “ sary where the Words immediately follow one
 “ another. Therefore all that *lies between*, is
 “ plainly Parenthetic to the course of the Epistle,
 “ and to be read and consider’d as *one long Pa-*
 “ *renthesis*.” If

If this reasoning be *certain* it must arise from this *establish'd Principle*, and rest upon this *universal Rule*: "That wherever, in the Interpretation of any Author, any Passage of any length shall occur, the whole of which may be taken out and consider'd as away, without breaking the Connexion or introducing a Chasm in the Sense, between the Words which immediately precede and those which immediately follow, if the Words which follow are not usher'd in by any Particles of Connexion, the whole of *that Passage* of whatever Number of Words, Sentences, Periods, Paragraphs, Sections, Chapters, &c. it may consist, is *plainly parenthetic* to the Course of that Discourse, History, Letter, Essay, &c. and must be consider'd as one *long Parenthesis*."

I flatter myself you will allow that the very Appearance of *this Rule* diffuses Day-light round us, *This* is the $\phi\omega\sigma\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$ *here*; at the first gleam of which, the pale Spectres of Hypothesis *start like guilty things*. *This* seems to open a Door and present a Field for Enterprize: But whether the Passage can be ascertain'd or cannot, by this means, is to be known, as this Gentleman truly says, only by the Trial. Let us try then. And the Place which I will select for Trial shall be (as St. Peter makes honourable mention of St. Paul and his Epistles) Part of an Epistle of St. Paul; and one which bears a strong resemblance in *some* respects to the Passage now under consideration. Particularly as it is in *the Introduction* to an Epistle. As the Apostle is expressly speaking of *himself*, himself *only*, in the singular Number. As he is speaking with as much *Earnestness* concerning *his coming* to his Disciples, as our Apostle is here about his *writing* to them. The Place is in the first Chapter of St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians,

P. 164.

P. 165.

P. 9.

thians, of which I will transcribe no more than is barely necessary for the fair Trial of this *Grand Criterion*.

Ver. 15. *In this confidence, I was minded to come unto you, before, that you might have a second benefit: And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia, unto you, and of you be brought on my way toward Judea. Moreover, I call God for a record upon my*

Ver. 23. *Soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your Faith, but are Helpers of your Joy: But I determin'd this with myself, that I would not come again to you in Heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same who is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came, I should have Sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, having Confidence in you all, that my Joy is the Joy of you all. This, that I am speaking of, is the third time I am coming amongst you. I told you before, and foretel you as if I were present a second time, and being absent, now I write, that if I come, &c.*

And how does this now follow? Is there any Chasm in the Sense? Any thing wanting to make the Connexion full and complete? But, you know, the Connexion as it here stands is between the third Verse of the second Chapter, and the beginning of the thirteenth Chapter; and, consequently, all between (i. e. only eleven Chapters wanting three Verses; that is only two hundred and sixteen Verses) is but one long Parenthesis, into which the Apostle is carried, occasionally, from the mention of his Solicitude for his Disciples.

Again, upon the same Principle, and by the same Rule, that this ingenious Gentleman has form'd so long a Parenthesis, it is obvious to see that he might have form'd one something longer, even in the
the

the Epistle which is the subject of our present Debate. For let *us suppose* St. Peter to break off from the Course of the Epistle at the end of the fourth, *as this Gentleman has done* at the end of the fifteenth, Verse of the first Chapter of this second Epistle, and, having reminded them of the exceeding great and precious Promises, by which having escap'd the Corruption that is in the World, through Lust, they might be Partakers of the divine Nature, (for it is just as natural to imagine that his Solitude for his People's escaping that Corruption, and obtaining those Promises, might carry him, occasionally, into a Parenthesis at this, as at the other Place; and every other Circumstance is the same in this, as in that Supposition) follow the Duct and Run of his Thought for their welfare, through a Series of Ideas, one hanging by another, till he recover himself, and resume the Argument from which he first started aside, *This second Epistle I now write unto you, Beloved, &c.*

P. 17.

P. 172.

For *this Reason* I cannot but conceive that there must be Exceptions to this unerring Rule; and that it is by no means a certain Ground to proceed upon, because let a Parenthesis be what it will, and constituted upon what Reasoning and in what manner you will, it is still but a Member of the Discourse in which it is found, and as such must bear some proportion to, and be something less than that, as a whole. But how is it proportionate as a part, when in one of these Instances (form'd upon the same Principle, and by the same Rule, as this Gentleman's) it is above five times as long as all the rest of the Epistle which is not in Parenthesis. In another near as long again; and even in that which is of his own formation, contains a Series of Twenty-eight Verses, in a Letter consisting barely of Sixty-three. So that if you deduct the

the

P. 41. the *two first Verses* of the Letter, which are *purely Prefatory*, and the *four last*, in which the Authority of *St. Paul* is *only call'd in* to strengthen his own Doctrine and Argument, the parenthetical Part will *exceed in length* the *whole of that* which is not parenthetical. And sure this Gentleman cannot take it amiss if I say, That, I think, I might by the *same Rule*, and with *as much Reason*, run from the first Words of his Epistle, *My Lord*, to the last, *Your Lordship's most oblig'd, obedient humble Servant*, and throw the one Hundred and seventy-five Pages, which lie between, into *one long Parenthesis*.

P. 171. How far therefore *this* Interpretation of Scripture, which proceeds upon *establish'd Rules of Criticism*, is more to be depended upon than those that have proceeded from *partial Lights*, and *vague Harangue*, I recommend it to *this ingenious* Author to recollect and examine before his next Edition. And as all the Merit he pretends to is not *superior Sagacity, superior Learning*, but to have *apply'd the Rules which Criticism affords, justly*, towards the *disentanglement* of this much perplex'd Passage, and in *one instance* to exemplify what *ought to be done in all*, — *Ab uno disce omnes*.

P. 170. If the Trammels of Criticism have cramp'd so *curious a Projector* in his first setting out, I do not wonder at the strong Disposition he has discover'd in the present Age to get rid of 'em. Nor can I think if he had flown upon the Wings of *Fancy and Conjecture* how he could have gone with less *Ease to himself*, or with less *Advantage* to the Business he had in hand, to his Journey's end.

ibid. This Gentleman, particularly, must have either forgot *himself again*, or I do not understand by what Authority he has taken upon him to institute *so long a Parenthesis of one whole Chapter*, and six Verses of another, in an Epistle consisting only of

P. 55.

of *three*, after having objected to Mr. *Ashton* for throwing *one small* Sentence into a Parenthesis, in which the Interruption of the course of the Epistle was not quite *so long-winded*, and where the Circumstances of the Passage seem'd, to say the best, *not less* to require it. P. 48.

But I recur to the main point at which I have been now aiming, That as this Gentleman's reasoning, upon which the Parenthesis is suppos'd to be built, is *not certain*, nor the Rule by which it is directed *without exception*, every Argument which is grounded upon it must be liable to the same Uncertainty, and the Sense of the Passage may fail of being ascertain'd by this *exceptionable* Rule of Criticism. And if *this only sure* way of critical Examination should fail at last, it is very possible, still, that we may have in a little time more, *Thirty* Explications instead of *Three*, and the Passage be thereby involv'd in Difficulties not his own, and the true Sense lost in the Confusion of Explications. And that *this ingenious Project* will stand us in no stead will appear farther from the *inconclusive Arguments* which are deduc'd by this Author from this *unprov'd* Supposition. For if we were to allow *this long Parenthesis*, and that this Gentleman could establish that Construction of the Place, which, after what has been said on that head, will hardly be allow'd; neither would this answer any purpose of his to shew that *some Evidences* of Christ's Coming in Glory are not contain'd in the Passage. I say we may allow the Parenthesis, and what would follow immediately from the supposition of it, without admitting any thing that will answer the purpose for which it is introduc'd by this Gentleman. *This* is what I now propose to argue.

And to one who can see at all to what Inference the nature of a Parenthesis will carry him, there

P. 3.

ibid.

- there can be no doubt that it is so far from leading us to the *precise and determinate* Intention of the Passage, that it cannot even shew *that* not to be the Intention, which we have suppos'd, and he denies, to be the intention of it. For allowing the Parenthesis, and allowing too the parenthetical Part of a Period to contain something *plainly different* from the Principal, let us try how far it may be concluded from hence, that the Passage in Controversy does not contain *some Evidence* of Christ's Coming again in Glory. In order to this we must first endeavour to discover what is the *principal Part of the Period* here. Now the Words out of which the suppos'd Parenthesis arises are these, *Moreover I will endeavour that you may be able after my Decease, to have these Things always in remembrance.* It is evident that *these Things*, the Things contain'd in that Expression, whatever they be, make the *principal Part of this Period*. If we can *eclaircise* this Expression we shall *eclaircise* the principal Point. 'Tis plain the Difficulty lies not in the Subject. Now, luckily for us, this very Expression, *these Things*, occurs no less than *four* different times *before this* in the compass of seven Verses. For if these Things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these Things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old Sins: Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. For if ye do these Things ye shall never fall. For so (*i. e.* by doing *these Things*) an entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these Things, though ye know 'em, and be establish'd in
the
- Ver. 15.
- P. 8.
- ibid.
- Ver. 8.
- Ver. 9.
- Ver. 10.
- Ver. 11.
- Ver. 12.

the present Truth. Yea, I think it meet, as ver. 13.
long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up,
by putting you in remembrance. Knowing, that I ver. 14.
must shortly put off this my Tabernacle, even
as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shew'd me. More-
over I will endeavour, that you may be able, ver. 15.
after my decease, to have these Things always
in remembrance.

To be quite clear in this Point, we must look back to what he had said before the eighth Verse, in which this Expression first occurs, to see *what Things* he had been there mentioning, and we shall find the Things he had been recommending, in the three preceding Verses, to be Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Charity. *These are the* ver. 5, 6, 7.
Things, which if they were in them, and abound-
ed, they would neither be barren nor unfruit-
ful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
These are the Things in which he who is defective,
is blind, and cannot see afar off, but is as one groping
in the Dark. These are the Things, which he
who does them, shall make his Calling and Election
sure, and shall never fall. These are the Things,
by the Performance of which, an Entrance shall be
minister'd richly unto those who do perform them,
into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Sa-
viour Jesus Christ. These are the Things which he
would never neglect to inculcate while he had Breath
to utter 'em. These are the Things which he would
endeavour, being dead, still to speak.

The Things, then, here so often repeated and
recommended, are, Every Christian Virtue,
Every Christian Grace. These Things make the
principal Point in this Period. So that admitting
the subsequent Verses to be Parenthetic, and
every Parenthesis to contain something plainly
different from the principal Point in a Period,
 yet

yet will it not follow, that the Thing included in this Parenthesis *may not* be the Proofs of Christ's Coming again in Glory, unless this Gentleman would have us suppose, that the *Virtues* and *Graces* of Christianity, are the *Proofs* of Christ's Coming again in Glory. For while there is a *plain difference* between these two Things, there is all that is necessary to answer this Gentleman's Description of the Parenthesis: And are not *the Proofs* of Christ's Coming again in Glory, even with the Rewards of Virtue, *plainly different* from the Virtues themselves? However, the Performance of one, and the Attainment of the other, may be, and most assuredly will be, one Day inseparably united, yet the *Practice* of one, and the *Proof* of the other, are now, and will for ever remain, two Things *most plainly different* from each other.

P. 38.

P. 24.

Nay, what is still worse, if we should even allow the Apostle, in the Place out of which the Parenthesis rises, to be speaking of the principal View of the Epistle, the Coming of Christ in Glory — yet would it not follow from thence that he might not here be urging the Evidences of Christ's Coming again in Glory? For what should hinder? Since all that is requir'd in a Parenthesis, and all the use this Gentleman desires to make of it, is, that what is contain'd in it shall be different, plainly so, from the principal Part of the Period, all this may very well be though the Evidence of Christ's Coming be contain'd in the Passage. Because *the Proof* of Christ's Coming again in Glory is *plainly different* from the *Doctrine* of his Coming again in Glory! And this *establish'd* Rule of Criticism exacts no more.

Nay the very Reasoning made use of by this Gentleman to confirm his Hypothesis, seems to bear

bear hard upon the Hypothesis itself, and concludes *more for* the Proofs of Christ's Coming again in Glory being urg'd here by the Apostle, than *against* it; supposing, still, the Parenthesis, and supposing, farther, the Coming of Christ in Glory to be the principal Part of the Period out of which it takes its rise. For what can bear a *more evident relation* to the Doctrine of Christ's Coming again in Glory, and be, at the same time, *more plainly different* from that Doctrine, than the *Proof* of it is? And what does this Gentleman attempt to infer more than that "The *something* contain'd in his Parenthesis, should be *plainly different* from that other *something*, out of which it arises, yet *relative* to it!

Nor can the least shadow of an Absurdity be rais'd, from this Method of Argumentation, against the Supposition of the Apostle's being here, urging the *Evidences* of Christ's Coming again, in the secondary and inclusive Part of the Period, 'till it be shewn that he has been urging the *same* Evidences in the Part which is Primary, and exclusive of the suppos'd Parenthesis: Which, I suppose, this Gentleman will not undertake to shew! For this Reasoning reaches no farther than to conclude, That the Things contain'd in the respective parts of the Period be *plainly different*; that is, *clearly not the same*. If, therefore, they are *plainly not the same* (as they must be in any Instance but this) there is no hurt done, notwithstanding what is said of the nature of a Parenthesis. But *the Proofs* of a Doctrine being *plainly different* from (that is, *evidently not the same* with) the *Doctrine* itself, the *Doctrine* may constitute the Principal, and the *Proof* of that Doctrine may, as naturally as (if not more so than) any other thing, be contain'd in the Parenthetic Part. And that this is the Case, in fact, in *confess'd Parentheses*, where
C they

they are introduc'd with the same Particle of Connexion which introduces this in debate between us, I refer this Gentleman to, the *only one* in, St. Peter's Epistles, at the eighth Verse of the second Chapter of this second Epistle ; (βλέμματι γάρ, &c.) and to no less than *Thirteen others* in the course of St. Paul's. *Rom.* ii. 13. (οὐ γάρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ) vii. 1. (γινώσκουσιν γάρ) 1 *Cor.* xv. 5. (σαλπίζει γάρ) xvi. 5. (Μακεδονίαν γάρ) 2 *Cor.* i. 20. (ἔσται γάρ) v. 7, (διὰ πίστεως γάρ) x. 4. (τὰ γάρ ὅπλα) *Gal.* ii. 8. (ὁ γάρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ) *Eph.* v. 9. (ὁ γάρ καρπὸς) *Heb.* v. 13. (νήπιος γάρ ἐστὶ) vii. 21. (οἱ μὲν γάρ χωρὶς) x. 23. (πιστὸς γάρ) xii. 20. (ἐκ ἑφερὺν γάρ) In every one of which it is easy to see, that the Thing included in the Parenthetic Part contains a Ground, or Reason, or Principle, or Argument for, or a Proof of, the Position deliver'd in the principal Part of the Period. If therefore he will have this to be a Parenthesis, he will, I presume, have it like all other Parentheses ; and, if it be so, it *may naturally*, and most *probably will*, contain some *Evidences* of the Coming of Christ in Glory.

If then *the nature* of this Passage, as a *Parenthesis*, will furnish us with no inconsiderable Clue to *the precise and determinate Intention* of it, from this Consideration, (which is the only one that is urg'd from *its Nature, as a Parenthesis*) that, in a Period, the Parenthetic Part contains something plainly different from the Principal, but P. 20, 21. relative to it ; and if we allow the Principal to contain the Doctrine of Christ's Coming again in Glory (which seems to come the nearest to the Purpose for which this Argument is introduc'd) the *Proofs of the Doctrine* of Christ's Coming again in Glory, seem to bid the fairest to be *the precise and determinate Intention* of it. Which is P. 37. quite

quite contrary to what this Gentleman intended to prove, when he told us, That it was for *this Reason* that he could not admit a Solution which supposes (as the Lord Bishop of *London's*, and Mr. *Ashton's* after his Lordship's, does) the Apostle to be here urging the Proofs of that Doctrine — as that Supposition is *inconsistent* with what appears to him *to be the Intention* of the Passage.

The Argument then from *the nature* of the Parenthesis having deserted from this Gentleman's side of the Question, and being plainly engag'd on the opposite side, we will now see, if you please, what Assistance he may receive from that which is deriv'd from the *Order and Dependence* (as he expresses himself) of it. Though, indeed, the Order and Dependence of this Part of the Epistle is *the same*, and *will always be so*, whether the Passage, under Deliberation, be consider'd as Parenthetic, or not.

But here we are interrupted by the Appearance of *another Argument* before its time, which this Author has unfortunately rang'd under the *first* Article of his Charge, though it properly belongs to the *second*: An Argument founded upon the Construction of the Words, and the Grammatical Application of the '*We's*' beginning from the Seventh Line of the 21st Page, and ending at the Twenty-first Line of the 23d Page, exclusive: As this, however, can have no Place here, unless the Author proposes, *by some establish'd Rule of Criticism*, to prove the *Intention* from the *Construction*, and then back again, the *Construction* from the *Intention*, as two *suspected Persons* may contribute their mutual Aid, by appearing to the Characters of each other, I shall beg leave, upon the strength of so good a Precedent as we have lately seen, to throw this into *one long Paren-*

thesis ; reserving the Consideration of it to a time when it may come to be more naturally consider'd, and proceed to his Proof from the Order and Dependence. —

P. 27. This Gentleman is of Opinion that from some Considerations arising from the Order and Dependence of the Parts of this Passage on each other, we may *fairly conclude*, “ That the design
“ of the Passage is to place the Authority of
“ the Apostle in its full Light as a *Teacher* of
“ Christ’s future Power and Coming, against
“ that of the *false Teachers* who should come after ; and consequently, that we are not to look
“ for here the *Evidences* upon which this Doctrine is founded.”

P. 55. Now the Order of this *fairly conclusive* Proof,
as far as I can understand it, is — “ That the
P. 24. “ Apostle having begun with setting before his
“ Christians of the Circumcision, the great and
“ precious Promises of their Faith, together
“ with the indispensable Condition of ’em, an holy
“ Life, proceeds to express *his Solicitude* about
“ their *continuing* in the same *Stedfastness* they
“ were then — And more especially, as he was
“ soon to die a Martyr of the Doctrine, *his Desire*
“ that he might leave them a *standing Prefe-*
“ *rative*, by calling the Truth of his Doctrine
“ back to their Remembrance — and,

“ That he assures them, That the Reason of
“ this (*i. e.* his Solicitude and Desire) was “ That
“ he had the *highest Assurance* and *greatest Certainty* of the Truth of his Doctrine from the
“ Miracles of the Glorification and Testimony
“ which he had seen and heard — and,

“ From a Word of Prophecy, *more sure than*
“ *these*, to which the highest Attention was due,
“ as being not from the Man himself, but from
“ the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

“ That

“ That *such* a Preparative as *this* must have a P. 25.
 “ wonderful Effect on their Minds — With
 “ respect to the *Subject*, as it was of infinite mo-
 “ ment. With respect to the *Teacher* — His
 “ great Love and Concern for them — His
 “ Zeal for the Doctrine — His Sincerity — His
 “ Distinction among the Apostles, having, with
 “ *only two others*, been admitted to this first
 “ Scene of Christ’s Glory — His having still
 “ this surer Word in whatever that Certainty con-
 “ sisted, of Prophecy.

“ That *all this* coming as the last Monition of P. 26.
 “ a dying Apostle, and their Apostle; That *all*
 “ *this*, he repeats, must strike their Minds, and
 “ prepare ’em for Indignation against *the false*
 “ *Teachers*.

“ That the Contrast between the different Ibid.
 “ and quite opposite Characters of *Immoral* and
 “ *Mercenary Teachers*, and that of the Apostle,
 “ who was ready to lay down his Life *in hope of*
 “ *the Reward of Virtue*, was successfully apply’d
 “ to inspire them with a just Indignation against Ibid.
 “ *such Teachers*.

“ That the former Part of the Passage in Con-
 “ troversy, rising naturally out of the mention
 “ of himself (as oppos’d to *false Teachers*) and
 “ the latter (the Description of those Teachers)
 “ being relative to the former, and both being P. 27.
 “ preparatory to what comes after, to guard them
 “ against the Doctrine of Christ’s *not Coming*
 “ again in Glory; That *this* being the Order of
 “ Dependence of this Part, he continues, so na-
 “ turally rising out of the preceding, and suited
 “ to the subsequent principal Part, but *different*
 “ from both, we may, he thinks, *fairly conclude*,
 “ that the Design of the Passage is as above.”

This, you see, is a *long Trouble*; long, indeed, P. 174.
 in comparison of the *very short* one of Hypo- 175.
 thesis.

thesis. — *Longa est injuria, longæ
Ambages, sed summa sequar fastigia rerum.*

Let us see, then, in as short a Compass as we can, whether any of these Particulars, or *all this* long Induction of 'em, can authorize us to *conclude fairly*, That the Apostle may not in the Passage under Consideration, be urging some *Evidences* of Christ's Coming again in Glory—— or rather whether every particular Consideration which is here advanced, will not lead us naturally, and, almost, unavoidably, to conclude that the Apostle in this Passage is urging some *Evidences* of Christ's Coming again in Glory?

If, after laying before his Disciples the great Promises of their Faith, and the indispensable Condition of obtaining them, the Apostle expresses his Solicitude about their continuing in the Stedfastness they were then—— is it unnatural to suppose him to be urging *some Evidences* of that Truth in which he was solicitous that they should continue stedfast!

If he expresses a Desire to leave a *standing Preservative*, after his Decease, of the Truths he had taught 'em, by calling 'em back to their Remembrance, could he do it more effectually than by leaving a *standing Memorial* of the Ground of those Truths, by calling back, at the same time, to their Remembrance *one of the principal Evidences* on which the Credit of those Truths was built?

If he assures them that the reason of his Solicitude and Desire was, that he had *the highest Assurance* and *greatest Certainty* of the Truth of the Doctrine *from the Miracles of the Glorification and Testimony* which he had seen and heard, could he have said more if he had expressly propos'd those Miracles as the *grand Support* of the Truth of that Doctrine!

If

If he assures them farther, that he had the *same Degree of Assurance* of the justness of their Expectation *from the Word of Prophecy*, still more sure, could he have express'd himself more fully if he had urg'd that Word of *Prophecy as an Evidence* of the Truth of what he was encouraging them to expect!

If such a Preparative was to have a wonderful Effect upon their Minds, would that Effect be *weaker* if these Considerations were urg'd as *Proofs* of the Point he was enforcing, than if they were *not* urg'd as *Proofs* of it!

If the Doctrine was of infinite moment, could the weight of it be *diminish'd* by the *Proof*!

Would not his Love and Concern for his Disciples, his disinterested Zeal and Sincerity in teaching, be equally visible, if he did offer *some Reasons* for the Truth of what he taught?

Was his Distinction among the Apostles, from his having, *only with two others*, been admitted to the first Scene of Christ's Glory, less conspicuous if he related that Miracle as a *Proof* of the Lesson he would inculcate, than if he related it as a simple Fact, without inferring any thing in aid of his Purpose from it!

Could his having still that surer Word of Prophecy (in whatever it consisted) for the Truth of his Doctrine, lose any thing of its Credit by being in fact, a *Proof* of it!

Could *all this* come with less Force as the last Monition of a dying Apostle, and of their Apostle, if he *prov'd* his Doctrine, than if he *prov'd* it *not*!

Could *all this* strike the Minds of those to whom it was written less, or inspire them less with Indignation against the *false Teachers*, whose greatest Danger lay in their insidious Doctrines,

by *producing Evidences* of a contrary Doctrine, than it would if *no such Evidences were produced* !

Does it take any thing away from the Contrast between a *true* and a *false* Teacher to find that one *brings Proof* for the Doctrine he teaches, while the other *has none to bring* !

Does not the former Part rise as naturally out of the mention of himself, and the latter relate as evidently to the former, and are not *both* as preparatory to what comes after, to guard 'em against the Doctrine of Christ's *not* Coming again in Glory, if you allow that the Apostle, in the former Part, is *offering some Proofs* of Christ's Coming again in Glory, than if you suppose him in that Passage, *to be offering none* !

P. 24. Do not the Proofs of Christ's Coming rise as naturally out of the preceding Part (in which he expresses his Solicitude to leave a standing Preservative against the contrary Doctrine) and are they not as evidently relative to the subsequent Part (which contains a *glowing Invective* against the *false* Teachers of that other Doctrine) and yet as different from both, as the Passage can be, if it include *no Proofs* !

P. 26. These Questions answer themselves — and from every Particular of *this* singly, and from *all this* coming with *united Force*, we may fairly conclude, the direct reverse of this Gentleman's Conclusion, that the Design of the Passage may be, upon his Principles, and in natural Consequence of every one of the Reasons he has assign'd for the contrary, to *prove the Doctrine*, and consequently that we *may* here look for the Proofs of that Doctrine.

So that this *fairly conclusive* Proof has the hard Fortune (which is no new thing in this only sure Method of Criticism) to *conclude fairly against the Argument* it was brought to support. It

It does not appear then, in fact, however it may have appear'd to this Gentleman, to be inconsistent with the Intention of the Apostle to suppose him urging here some Evidences for the Coming of Christ in Glory ---- nor can *this* be *any good Reason* why a Solution which contains such a Supposition as the Bishop of *London's* and Mr. *Ashton's* do, may not be admitted.

Nor do I see, if you allow that no Proofs are offer'd in the Passage, and allow, too, all that is suppos'd by this Author, (which we will now do to reserve it for future Consideration) how *all this* could establish the Authority of the Apostle. Supposing him to speak of *himself alone* (which it is the Business of three Pages to prove) how would this shew his Distinction amongst the Apostles more (to those who knew that *two others* were admitted to the same Honour with him, as the People to whom he is writing, confessedly did) than if you suppose him to be speaking of *himself and those two others* !

But if the *mention of a Miracle* which *he* with *two others* saw, could impress any new Ideas of Respect on the Minds of his Disciples ---- his having *the Spirit of Prophecy*, which was not peculiar to himself, but common to him with other Apostles, could excite no Idea of *Eminence and Distinction* above others of his Brethren. And I would be glad to know how this Author will reconcile his Reasoning in Page 121, and Page 25, with what he expressly asserts in Page 63, " That
" it would not heighten the Force of his Me-
" mento if he suggested that it was the *general*
" Doctrine of *all* who taught the Gospel, as well
" as *himself* ? " P. 121.

For neither could it *add* to the Notion of *his Authority* to suggest that he was endow'd with any Gift (that of Prophecy for Instance) which
was

was not peculiar to *himself*, but the common Privilege of many who taught the Gospel as well as *himself*!

How can it be *suppos'd*, as it is here *very strongly insisted* upon, That St. Peter's *having still the Spirit of Prophecy* for the Truth of what he had taught 'em, could give him any preference above his Fellow-labourers, who were under the Influence of the same Spirit in the things which they had taught!

It seems clear that the *Spirit of Prophecy in particular*, was entirely unnecessary in the *relation only*, and repetition of a Doctrine which had been *already foretold* by Christ his Master. And *Inspiration in general* being included in the very Notion of an Apostle of Christ, it could *add no weight* to his *Authority to declare that expressly* of himself in any part of an Epistle, which must be presum'd and proceeded upon, as a Thing known and allow'd through the whole of it.

P. 168. It *appears* then that the *first* and principal of the *three Reasons* upon which this Gentleman grounds his three Objections is *merely imaginary and inconclusive*. For till he has *prov'd some Intention* of the Apostle, which, allowing all his Suppositions, he has *not* done, he cannot argue against the Propriety of admitting any Part of a Solution from its *Inconsistency* with what *appears* to be the *Intention* of the Apostle. You will
P. 40. now, I hope, allow me, if it be only for your own ease, to conclude that *'tis not impossible* but a Solution may be admitted, which supposes some *Evidences* of Christ's coming again in Glory to be contain'd in the Passage.

II. I go on to the second Allegation against Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, That he *besides* understands the *We*, in "*We* have a more sure Word of
of

of Prophecy" of *Christians in general*: to shew
 " That this does *not seem* to be contrary to *all*
grammatical Construction. (As to the Design of the
 Passage nothing need be said till the Design of
 the Passage is *shewn*). In which Enquiry it will
fall in, naturally, to be consider'd how far the *We's*,
 in the beginning of the Passage, may relate, as
 this Author supposes, to *St. Peter himself*.

Now this Passage, we are inform'd, plainly rises P. 21.
 out of a Place where the Apostle is speaking of
himself, of *himself alone*. And that, *for this Reason*,
 there can be no doubt that 'tis *himself* he under-
 stands by *We* all along, though *St. James* and
St. John were equally concern'd in the fact there
 related, with *St. Peter*. But to this I must op- P. 35.
 pose an Authority which cannot but be of great
 weight with me in this case, as well as yourself,
 this Gentleman's own. For thus he himself de-
 scribes the Nature of a Parenthesis, " That the
 " parenthetic Part contains something *plainly dif-*
 " *ferent* from the Principal." Now this differ- P. 21.
 ence may as well consist in the *Persons* as in the
Thing spoken of. As *St. Peter*, therefore, is con-
 fessedly speaking of *himself*, *himself alone*, in the
 principal Part, he *may* be speaking of *himself*, but
not alone in the parenthetic: so that from this
 Gentleman's own Principle it will follow that
 there *may be some doubt* whether, it be *himself*
alone that he understands by *We* all along, as
St. James and *St. John* *may* be included in *that*
We as well as *St. Peter*.

I observe farther, " That wherever there *can be*
no doubt that *St. Peter* speaks of *himself alone*, he
 expresses himself in the *singular Number* by *I*, and
 not *We*. This I think may be observ'd *universally*.
 And I believe it will puzzle this *learned Gentle-* P. 169.
 man to produce *even one single* Passage from either
 of his Epistles where the Case is otherwise. As
 it

it is evident then that in the Place out of which the Passage takes its rise, he speaks of *himself alone* in the *singular* Number, Σπεδάσω, μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐξοδόν, there *may* be *some doubt* whether if he had *continu'd* to speak of *himself alone*, he would *not have continu'd* to speak in the *same* Number. One would think that *no presumption* could arise from the *variation* of the Number that the *Persons* spoken of were the *same*; but that a *fair Presumption* would arise from the use of a *different* Number that *different* Persons were intended in it; especially as we *are certain* that *more Persons* than *one* were interested in the Fact which he is there relating. And whatever weight there may be in these Observations, to shew that St. Peter may not *undoubtedly* understand *himself alone* in the *We's* by which the ἐγνωρίσαμεν, the ἐπόπται γεννηθέντες, and the ἡχύσαμεν are translated, in the relation of the Miracles, so much will be taken off from the *certainty* of the *We*, by which the ἔχομεν is translated, when he speaks to another Point, having reference to *himself alone*, if it can be shewn that what he there asserts may be truly and properly asserted of *more Persons* than *himself alone*. For though it is out of doubt that the *same Person* still speaks, and that the *same Persons* are spoken to *here as there*; that is, *that the Apostle is still writing to his Disciples*, yet there may be *more doubt* who the *We* are in this Sentence than in the first, till it appear of *whom* the Assertion here made by the Apostle, may be *truly and properly* made. And till it be shewn that what is there asserted cannot be *truly and properly* asserted of *Christians in general*, there will remain *some doubt* that the *We*, here, may relate to *Christians in general*.

As the first *We's* cannot properly be apply'd to the Apostle *alone*, because his manner of speaking
of

of *himself alone* is *I*, and not *We*. And as that Expression can be restrain'd to *two others only* beside himself, for *no other Reason* than that *only two others* were concern'd, by confession, in the Subject which he there treats: For it might as well comprehend *all the Apostles* as two, if *all the Apostles*, as well as *two*, had been manifestly engag'd in that Circumstance, or all Christians as well as all the Apostles, if all Christians as well as the Apostles had been engag'd in it. So, when he is treating of *another* Subject, there can be *no other Reason* assign'd why the same Expression, the latter *We*, may not comprehend *all Christians* with himself, if it be shewn that *all Christians* are *equally concern'd* in that Subject with *himself*.

This Gentleman is, I think, a little too sanguine when he represents it as a Supposition not to be made that the *Apostle could* "speak of all
 "Christians in common, in the first Person, in
 "which he had confessedly spoke of *himself* (I
 "add, and *two others*) in *contradistinction* to them,
 "and then, in the very next Sentence, change
 "the Person again, and speak of 'em, (I suppose
 "to 'em is meant) in the second Person;" for how absurd soever this may appear in the Eye of a *Critic*, it will imply no Absurdity in the Opinion of a *Christian Divine*, when I shall produce an instance in which *an Apostle* does, undeniably, speak of *all Christians* in common, in the first Person, in which he had, confessedly, spoke of himself (and other Apostles) in *contradistinction* to Christians in common; nay of a *single Apostle* too, in *contradistinction* to *all the Apostles*, nay of *himself alone* in *contradistinction* to all the rest, and then, in the *very next Sentence*, changes the Person again and speaks to them in the second Person.

P. 67.

P. 23.

P. 67.

P. 53. The Place in which I would instance (in which I am very clear, and which seems to me so clearly apposite to the present Purpose that it will strike at the *first* Appearance, and bid fair to bear a *second* view) is in the First Chapter of the First Epistle of St. *John*.

P. 43.

At the Seventh Verse *the Apostle* speaks undeniably of *Christians in common* in the first Person, *If we walk in the Light*, εἰς ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατοῦμεν. In the eighth the same, *If we say that we have no Sin*, εἰς ἐπὶ μὲν ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν---In the ninth the same, *If we confess our Sins*, εἰς ἐπὶ ὁμολογῶμεν ἡμῶν----In the tenth the same, *If we say we make*, εἰς ἐπὶ μὲν ποιοῦμεν----

In which *first Person* he had confessedly spoke of himself (and other Apostles) in *contradistinction* to Christians in general, at the first and third Verses, *What we have seen and heard, we declare unto you*, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἑώρακάμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν. In which he had spoke of St. *Thomas alone*, in *contradistinction* to *all* the Apostles. Our *Hands have banded*, αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν. Ver. 1. Of *himself alone* in *contradistinction* to *all* the rest of the Apostles, and to *all Christians*. Ver. 4. *These Things we write unto you*, ταῦτα γράφομεν ὑμῖν. And then in *the very next Sentence*, in which he had spoke of Christians in common in the *first Person*, he changes the Person again and speaks to them in the second, (and of himself in the singular Number) Τεχνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν, ἵνα μὴ ἀμαρτήτε, *These Things I write unto you that ye should not sin*.

P. 41. And if this *very learned Gentleman* will give me leave, I will shew him from this very Epistle, that it is no *singular* thing with this very Apostle, to speak of *himself* in conjunction with *all* Christians in the first Person, and then in the very next, nay, in the very same Sentence, change.

change the Person, and speak to them in the second.

At the fourth Verse of the first Chapter, we read, *We have received* (ἡμῖν δεδομέναι) *the most great and precious Promises, that through them ye may be partakers of the Divine Nature, γένηθε.*

Again, at the thirteenth Verse of the third Chapter it is written, *We expect*, προσδοκῶμεν, *new Heavens and a new Earth, wherefore, beloved, take ye heed*, σπουδάσατε.

That the *We's* in both these Passages relate to all Christians, St. Peter himself in another Place bears witness; where he thus addresses himself to his Audience, *The Promise is to you, and to your Children, and to all*, ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, καὶ πάντι, *as many as the Lord our God shall call*, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν. And that he speaks to 'em again in the very next, in the very same Sentence, in the second Person needs no Proof, being so plain that *he who runs* may read it. Acts ii. 39.

These are Instances exactly similar to the place in controversy, *We have a more sure Word of Prophecy, to which ye do well in giving Attention*, ἔχομεν, ὃ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες. There may be some doubt then whether the Apostle speaks of himself alone, or of himself in conjunction with all Christians, in *We have a more sure Word* (I speak with respect to the grammatical construction of the *We*, now, without any regard, at present, to the Sense of the *more sure Word*) when in two other Places, in the same Epistle, exactly of the same Nature, he does, indisputably, comprehend all Christians with himself, in the same Person. I cannot, therefore, but disagree with this Gentleman, "That if it be not certain that St. Peter speaks here of himself alone, no thing is certain in Language." And from hence I draw my last Consequence against this second

second Objection, " That the understanding the "*We* in "*We* have a more sure Word of Prophecy of Christians in general," is by no means *contrary to all Grammatical Construction*, but that the Bishop of London's Interpretation, and Mr. *Ashton's*, in both which it is so understood, are, in this respect, as just as they were, notwithstanding the Force of this Objection.

P. 29.

III. I come now to the *third* Objection made by this learned Gentleman against Mr. *Ashton's* Solution (and against *his own too*) " That in " it the *other We's*, which we own refer to the "*Apostles* only, are applied as an *Evidence to* "*Christians in common*, in a manner which appears " to him, to say the best, too labour'd, and not " a little *perplex'd*." Now as this Gentleman has not attempted to assign *any other Reason* for his Objection to the Application of *these We's*, which relate to the *Apostles* alone, as an *Evidence to* *Christians* in common, than " That it *appears to* " *him*, to say the best, too labour'd, and not " a little *perplex'd*," it may be thought unnecessary to offer *any other Reply* than " That it *appears to me*, to say the least, to be pretty natural, and tolerably plain." But though the *Ipse dixit* of a great Critic may carry Conviction with it, as it comes from *one* who has an infallible Touchstone to distinguish Right from Wrong, yet, as the *greatest Exactness of Proof* may with the *greatest Reason* be requir'd from the *Retailers of Conjecture and Hypothesis* for every Assertion they make, I will produce *my Reason* why this manner of applying the *We's* in "*We heard*," "*We were Eye-witnesses*," "*We made known*," does *appear to me* to be pretty natural, and tolerably plain. And it is only this, That if the *Apostle* were suppos'd and allow'd to be here offering

offering this Fact as an *Evidence to Christians* in common, he could *not* possibly have express'd himself in *any other* manner than he now does. For I desire to be told in what other manner any Person can express himself with regard to a Fact he is giving in evidence of any thing, to any Number of Men, but by *declaring solemnly*, as the Apostle here does, *to them*, that he had the *strongest assurance* from his *own Senses* of the truth of it! Does not St. *John* in the Passage cited above, *ground the Evidence* of the Truth of the Doctrine he was inculcating into *his Disciples*, that is, Christians in common, upon what *he had seen and heard*, “ὁ ἰωρᾶναμεν ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν.” that is, upon *We's* (to use this Gentleman's elegant Expression) which we own refer to the *Apostles* alone! Will this Gentleman except against the Apostle's Evidence as incompetent to all Christians for the Truth of Facts which he *declares he saw and heard*. Or to any *Inferences* he shall think proper to deduce as resting on the Authority of those, or of Facts of the *same Nature* with those. Or will he shew me *any Evidence* which carries *more* Conviction with it to *him*, for the Truth of *all* that he as a Christian believes, than that which arises from Facts which Apostles *declare in their own Names*, that they have seen and heard!

It is one thing to *attest a Fact*, and another to receive *the Evidence* arising from that *Attestation*. And though the Apostles alone were capable of doing the first, yet every Christian, I hope, may with safety admit and depend upon the other. Else what shall we say to *our Ground of Trust* in that Foundation of our blessed Hope which is laid by the *Apostles* and *Prophets* upon the *Authority and Support* of Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge to be the *Head-corner Stone*.

And indeed if the Case were otherwise, and if the Facts which are here introduc'd by the Apostle in confirmation of his Doctrine, did carry no Evidence in them to the Body of Christians but to himself alone, it should seem to follow, That *St. Peter* is not addressing this Part, at least, of his Epistle, as has been idly imagin'd, to the *Jewish* Converts, but to himself alone! And to shew that *St. Peter's* Epistles were written by *St. Peter* to *St. Peter* himself, would, I confess, be a Discovery unknown to any Commentator, and worthy to be reserv'd for the Invention of this only sure Method of Interpretation.

I cannot, therefore, but think that *this* is a good Reason why the *We's* mention'd by this
 vide p. 29. Gentleman, may be apply'd, as an Evidence of the Doctrine, by the Apostle to Christians in common, though they refer, as to the relation of the Fact, to the Apostle's alone, till this Gentleman shall produce a better, why *it appears to him* that they *cannot* be so apply'd: and, consequently, that a Solution may be admitted, which applies 'em in this manner, as the Solution objected to by this Gentleman, and that which he has undertaken to adopt, evidently do.

We have now examin'd fully the *three Objections* rais'd by this Author against Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, and the *three Reasons* upon which he has grounded those three Objections; and we find, That the *Objections*, supposing them to be well-grounded, *bear equally hard* against the *Opinion he espouses*, as they do against the *Opinion he rejects*. We have seen farther, that the *three Reasons* on which the Objections are grounded, are, *in fact*, *no Reasons*; but *all of 'em*, and every
 P. 165. one, to say the best, but *ingenious Conjectures*. Consequently that the Solution which *he cannot admit*, as well as that which *he can*, are *equally*
 both,

both, and each *sufficiently* credible, notwithstanding the Attack which he so dextrously directed to one, but which unfortunately fell foul on the other.

And *this* he is pleas'd to call a general Answer to Mr. *Ashton's* Scheme. I heartily give Mr. *Ashton* Joy upon being the Author of a Scheme which can admit no other Answer than *this* from so critical an Examiner! Such an Answer from such a Hand is worth a thousand Defences from conjectural Writers! But let us not conclude too hastily, nor sing *Te Deum* before a Victory. As this Gentleman has, not out of any Necessity there was of farther Examination, but out of pure regard to Mr. *Ashton*, condescended to enter into a more particular Inquiry, it is but fair, doubtless, to give those Particulars their proper weight. The Superstructure may be beautiful though the Foundation be insecure; and perhaps we may find something worth gathering from the Branches, though the Root, alas! be rotten!

P. 29.

P. 4.

ibid;

Let us ascend then under the Convoy of so good a Guide, from *this* Ground work to survey the Wonders of the fair Fabric.

III. But before he enters upon the more particular Examination of Mr. *Ashton's* Solution, he proposes previously to consider the Objections made by that Author to my Lord of London's Sense, that is indeed to his own Sense too. Here, I confess, I lower my Pen; and though I entertain'd no doubt of being able to defend Mr. *Ashton's* Opinion against this Author in those Points in which it agrees with his Lordship's, it is with a trembling Hand that I proceed to defend it on any point in which it differs from the Sentiment of that consummate Master. But I fortify myself with an entire Resolution to assert nothing but necessary Truth, with an honest Hope that no great Mind can receive any Displeasure from any thing that

P. 29.

Is so. By this means I shall secure myself against the fear of giving any Offence *to those* whom I should be sorry to offend; regardless of the Censures of *others* who, misled by their own gross Appetite, disgust the more delicate Sense by a *nauseous Civility*! I proceed therefore to the Arguments of this Gentleman.

There are *two Things* then in which Mr. *Ashton* has taken the liberty to dissent from his Lordship's Opinion. "The *speedy* Coming of Christ," and the *Comparison* and *Preference* of the Word of Prophecy mention'd by St. *Peter* as a *Proof* to the Miracles mention'd in the same Place by the same Apostle.

P. 50.

In the first of these this Gentleman acquiesces, when he tells us, "That as to the Coming of Christ in our Polemic Passage, relating to *his* Coming to judge the Quick and the Dead, I entirely agree with Mr. *Ashton*; and instead of objecting, thank him for what he has said against another more speedy Coming being intended there."

To the second he objects, and we will give his Objections all the weight they can fairly carry with 'em, not dismissing them with a general Answer, but entering, particularly, into the Particulars as they arise.

After having defin'd accurately, and minutely, what he intends to express by *Prophecy* and *Miracle*, by *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, by a Prophecy and a Miracle, by the Prophecy and the Miracle, in order to avoid running into a snare into which he supposes Mr. *Ashton*, and many an ingenious Man before him, have suffer'd themselves to be betray'd by an Elegance of Expression, or Affinity of Terms (the use of which it will be time enough to consider when we come to his *Application*

cation of it) He sets out ominously, for he stumbles in the first Step he takes, when he tells us, "That the *Conclusion* of Mr. *Ashton's* reasoning against my Lord of *London* is in these Words: St. *Peter* never did compare Prophecy to Miracles as a Proof which he preferr'd." But finding the Slip he had made, he recovers himself in the next Page, and, with some little reluctance, begins to confess that the Words above-cited are *not* the *Conclusion* but an *Inference from* the *Conclusion*. Which *Conclusion* is, "That Prophecy before it is accomplish'd, is *not* a better Evidence for any Truth than Miracles, nor can admit of any such Companion." And, for *this Reason* Mr. *Ashton* thinks it is a *most reasonable Inference*, "That St. *Peter* never did compare such Prophecy to Miracles as a *Proof* which he thought *better*."

P. 30.

P. 31.

Vide Dissert. p. 103.

To the justness of this reasoning the Gentleman does not think proper to object, but endeavours rather to evade the force of it, with respect to his Lordship's Opinion, because he does not say, "That St. *Peter* compares Prophecy with Miracles," but "*the* Prophecies of the Old and New Testament relative to the Point in question, with *the* Miracles of the Mount." And that the Bishop understands St. *Peter* to say, "that *these* Prophecies do more assure us of the Point in debate, than *that* Miracle does." The Matter then to be determin'd between this Gentleman and Mr. *Ashton* is, "How far it appears from Mr. *Ashton's* reasoning on this head, that *these* particular Prophecies are not a better Evidence than *those* particular Miracles." This we should now proceed to clear. But this Gentleman, again, makes this Inquiry unnecessary, by telling us in the next Page, that he allows, That if Mr. *Ashton* has prov'd, *in general*, of any Prophecy whatever,

P. 30.

P. 31.

P. 32.

that it is *not a better* Argument for any thing than a Miracle, he has prov'd it of *these particular* Prophecies, and *these particular* Miracles.

Is not this absolutely giving up the point in favour of Mr. *Ashton*? No, the Gentleman has yet another subterfuge at hand; and asks the noble Lord to whom he addresses his Letter, "What is here meant by a Prophecy? A bare Prediction *unprov'd* to be the Word of God, " or a Prediction *prov'd* to be his Word." And answers himself. "There can be no doubt. Write " instead of *Prophecy* not fulfill'd cannot be said " to be a *better* Argument than a Miracle, because it is no Argument without a Miracle. " A Prediction *prov'd* to be the Word of God is " no Argument without a Miracle. And a Prediction not *prov'd* to be the Word of God, &c. and from the Sense of one, and Nonsense of the other, 'tis plain that *Prophecy there* means a Prediction *unprov'd*.

To let this Gentleman see, at once, what force there is in this acute Question, I would only ask him, in my turn, when the Bishop of *London* says, "The Prophecy deliver'd by the Angel " [to *Gideon*] was as much a Prophecy before, " as it was after Miracles wrought in confirmation of it." "But that it was not more sure before the Miracles than after." What is *here* meant by a Prophecy? A bare Prediction, unprov'd to be the Word of God? Or a Prediction prov'd to be his Word? I will answer as he does, There can be no doubt. And prove it in his manner. Write instead of, "The Prophecy was as much a Prophecy, the Prophecy was as much a Prediction *prov'd* to be the Word of God, before the Miracles, as it was after. And from the *Nonsense* of this, infer, as he has done, that it is plain, Prophecy there means a Prediction *unprov'd*.

But

But would not the Press groan under the Absurdity, would not every Stall reject the Nonsense, would not even *M---t---n's* Ghost look with an Air of Disdain, or at least with a *ghastly Smile*, upon the Sophistry, if I were to go on, under the Dictate of this Gentleman's Prescription.----“ But is it, my Lord, unprov'd Prediction that Mr. *Collins* thinks the Apostle intends “ when he mentions the more sure Word ? ” “ Whether it be or not, let his own Words “ testify, when, in his Exposition of the Passage, “ he says, That Prophecies deliver'd in an *inspir'd* Book are, *when fulfill'd*, such as may be “ deem'd sure and demonstrative Proofs, and “ which Peter prefers, in this Passage, as an Argument to the miraculous Attestation. The “ Conclusion, therefore, let the Reasoning be ever “ so just, is *nothing* to Mr. *Collins* : and it is possible notwithstanding all that the Bishop of “ London has said, that Mr. *Collins's* Sense of the “ Words, may be the true Sense. Because, “ as “ this Gentleman asserts,” there is no Reasoning “ from Prophecy, taken as an unprov'd Prediction, to Prophecy, meant of Prediction, prov'd “ and acknowledg'd to be the Word of God.”

Now what kind of an Argument is this, that, if there be any thing conclusive in it, will overthrow the Book he has taken upon him to defend, as well as that he has thought fit to confute ! For if this Gentleman would have his Readers think that this Reasoning of his is of any Force against Mr. *Ashton*, he must excuse me for attempting to open their Eyes, by shewing that it carries, precisely, the same weight with it against his Lordship ; which, I presume, is contrary to what he intended to prove. If, then, his Lordship's Argument against Mr. *Collins* has nothing to fear from such Chicanery, neither

will Mr. *Ashton's* Objection against his Lordship's Opinion lose any of its weight from the same Method of proceeding in answer to that Objection.

The Pertinence and Propriety of this *smart Interruption*, may, perhaps, be more clearly seen by a natural and familiar Illustration. Let us suppose, then, this Gentleman in Conversation with the noble Lord his Correspondent, to entertain his Lordship, by way of friendly Altercation, as follows ---- “ Your Lordship’s Purse, my
“ Lord, is a *more useful* Companion to your
“ Lordship in your Travels, than your Money.
“ How so, Doctor, we will suppose my Lord to
“ answer, I cannot readily discern the Propriety
“ of your Comparison : My Purse is, indeed, a
“ very useful Companion, when I have Money
“ in it, but it can hardly be said to be *more use-*
“ *ful* than my Money, because it would be of no
“ use to me without my Money ! But, pray,
“ my Lord, *short* replies my Critic, let me ask
“ your Lordship what your Lordship here means
“ by a Purse ? a bare Bag without Money, or
“ a Bag with Money in it ? There can be no
“ doubt. Say instead of, Because a Purse, Be-
“ cause a Bag with Money ; and say again, Be-
“ cause a Bag without Money — and from the
“ Nonsense of the one, and the Sense of the
“ other, your Lordship will plainly perceive,
“ that a Purse here means a Bag without Mo-
“ ney ---- and therefore as I am speaking only
“ of a full Purse, let your Lordship’s Reasoning
“ be ever so just, the Conclusion is *nothing to*
“ *me*. For there is no Reasoning from a Purse,
“ taken as a Bag without Money, to a Purse,
“ taken as a Bag with Money in it !”

p. 30.

Methinks, I see his Lordship smiling at this Parade ! But the real Reason of my putting the Matter in this Light, is, That this Gentle-
man

man seems to me to have suffer'd what many an *arch* Critic has before him, a sort of *Word-catching* and *living on a Syllable*, to impose upon him; and, I hope, this will furnish him with a Clue to lead him out of the Labyrinth.

But to cut Mr. *Ashton* off from all Resource, he has another Argument at hand ---- “ Your Lordship, possibly, will be led to think ----- that Mr. *A.* must mean Prophecy in the Sense that St. *Peter* and my Lord of *London* meant it --- But to this I must oppose an Authority --- Mr. *A.*’s own. For thus he himself describes Prophecy:” “ Prophecy is nothing else but the Relation, or History, of a future Act.” P. 35.

The Condition of this Argumentation is such, that “ Whoever describes Prophecy to be *the Relation of a future Act*, cannot mean it in the same Sense that St. *Peter* and my Lord of *London* meant it, but stands convicted, out of his own Mouth, of a contrary Meaning.” ---- But does not the Bishop of *London* himself thus describe Prophecy: ‘ That it is a Relation or Description of something future.’ And will it follow from hence that this excellent Prelate cannot mean Prophecy in the same Sense that St. *Peter* and he himself means it! P. 31.
Disc. 2.
Ed. 5.
1749.

But, abstracting from all Authority, let us see what Advantage this Gentleman will be able to draw from this Description of Prophecy: and how will it follow from thence that Mr. *Ashton* is reasoning from Prophecy as bare Prediction! Will this Gentleman be pleas'd to give us any other Description of this Prophecy to *Gideon*: “ Thou shalt deliver *Israel* from the Hands of “ the *Midianites*,” than that it is the Relation, or History, of a future Act — (I say *an Act*, because this great Critic seems to start at the Expression, as if he had never heard of the mighty *Acts*

of

of the Lord, of the rest of the Acts of the Kings of *Israel* and of *Judah*—or of the *Acts* of the holy Apostles!) But this Prophecy, we read in the Discourses, was as much a Prophecy before it was prov'd to be the Word of God by Miracles, as it was after it had been prov'd to be so. The Proof of its Divinity made no Alteration in the Prophecy: The Miracles made it neither more, nor less—but left it, as they found it, a Relation only, as it remains in the Book of *Judges* to this Hour, of a future *Act*. An *Act* future, I add, to avoid any of this Gentleman's Pleasantry, at the time of its Delivery.

But if a Prophecy, or relation of a future *Act*, be *no more than that* after the addition of a Miracle, or of Miracles, to what Purpose, you may say, are the Miracles apply'd?—I answer, to shew you, indisputably, *whose* Relation it is. Which, certainly, is a different Consideration from the Nature of a Prophecy. Prov'd or not prov'd, to be the Word of God, the Prophecy is equally a Relation, and no more than a Relation, of a future *Act*; and therefore describing it to be so, determines nothing for, or against its being one, or the other.

Suppose again the Honourable Personage, who is, at the same time, entertain'd and instructed with this Gentleman's Correspondence, to give, in Discourse, a Description of a Man, or of a Horse; and having collected all the Properties which make up the general Notion of the Things express'd by the Words *Man* and *Horse*, to be interrupted by a pleasant Remark of this Gentleman's. "Your Lordship will allow me to observe, that you are now speaking, only, of a *naked* Man, and of a Horse *without Shoes*." "Nay, prithee, Doctor, says my Lord, you cut too fine. I speak of a Man and a Horse, and
"you

“ you keep talking to me of *Cloth* and *Iron*.
 “ Let me ask you, was the celebrated Mathematician *less a Man* when he ran out of the Bath
 “ with his favourite Problem in his Head, than
 “ he was *before he undress'd*? Or is the great
 “ Mr. *Broughton* less a Man when he bares his
 “ brawny Arm, than he is when his Clothes are
 “ on? And are not you, my good Friend, as
 “ much a Man when you throw aside your solemn Incumbrances, and scratch your bare
 “ Head into all the Exactness of the most regular Criticism, as you are when you enter the
 “ applauding Senate-house in all your Formalities? And will not my Lady's Pad, here, be
 “ as much a Horse when the Farrier is paring its
 “ Hoofs, as it is now?

“ Let me take the Matter in another Light.—
 “ I say that *History*, for instance, is nothing but
 “ a Relation of past Facts—or that a *Promise*
 “ is nothing else but a Declaration of some future Favour intended to Somebody. You
 “ take me up, and say, “ That I evidently
 “ speak of History, barely, as a Human Composition, or of a Promise made, only, by a
 “ Man! I beg your Pardon. I speak of *History* and of a *Promise*; without respect to the
 “ Original of either as from *Man*, or from *God*:
 “ I may mean, notwithstanding, any thing in my
 “ Description, either, or neither, or both! The
 “ *Author* does not change the Nature of the
 “ *Thing*. The History and the Promise will be
 “ what they are—let the Author of one or the
 “ other be who you will.”—And so will a Prophecy too!

I cannot discover, therefore, by what Medium this Gentleman will infer, that *bare* Prediction is only intended by describing Prophecy to be “ nothing else but the relation of a future Act,” unless
 he

he will shew that Prophecy is *something more* after the Miracles, than it was before !

But what degree of Ingenuity this Gentleman has shewn in this vigorous Attack upon Mr. *Ashton*, and how well grounded this Part of his Charge is, will appear, evidently, from running over, cursorily, Mr. *Ashton's* own Reasoning on this Head.

P. 92.
& seq.

He gives this Reason for dissenting from the *Comparison* made by the Bishop in these Words :
 “ It seems to be impossible, in the Nature of the
 “ Thing, that St. *Peter* could compare any Pro-
 “ phesy of *Christ*, not yet fulfill'd, and prefer
 “ it as a Proof of any Thing, even of the very
 “ Event of which it is a Prophecy, to a Miracle
 “ wrought in support of the Expectation of that
 “ Event, *for this* plain Reason : That an unac-
 “ complish'd Prophecy, by whomsoever deli-
 “ ver'd, can only claim Admission as an Evi-
 “ dence, upon the strength of its being the *Word*
 “ of *God* ; and you can have no greater Assu-
 “ rance, possibly, of its being the *Word* of *God*,
 “ than from a Miracle.”

He then, answers an Objection which had been, idly, made to his Lordship's Discourses, “ That
 “ Prophecy not fulfilled, carries with it *no* Evi-
 “ dence at all.” In answer to which he observes,
 “ That if there be any way *without* the Prophè-
 “ cy by which its Divine Original may be ascer-
 “ tain'd, it will then necessarily carry Conviction
 “ with it. For Prophecy, he continues, being
 “ nothing else but the Relation of a future Act,
 “ and every thing future being open to the Eye
 “ of him with whom we have to do, the moment
 “ you have determin'd the Relation to be *his*,
 “ you have *undeniably prov'd* the Futurity of that
 “ Fact. — And upon this foot, he adds, both
 “ *Jews* and Christians did, and do expect, the
 Accom-

“ Accomplishment of all the Promises on which they built, and build their Hopes !

He afterwards resumes his Argument. “ That *such a Prophecy as this* having no Authority but from Miracles, cannot be put in Competition with Miracles, in point of Evidence.”--- Which Reasoning he supports by Quotations from the Discourses — “ He next considers what Advantage the Bishop’s Argument may receive from saying, That the Miracle affords only a Presumption that Christ may come again, &c. but that he will *so* come, &c. is to be learnt with Certainty only from the Prophecy.” To shew how far this will conclude, he puts a Case exactly similar, and supposes the Apostle to be enforcing the Doctrine of the Resurrection ; and finding that the Argument will not answer in this Case, he returns to his first Position, That a Prophecy, not fulfill’d, cannot be a better Argument than a Miracle for any thing ; because it is no Argument for any thing without a Miracle.”

These are the Words with which this Gentleman has chose to amuse himself, and his Readers, in the manner we have seen, by a Pretence of shewing that Mr. *Ashton* must mean by Prophecy, Prediction not prov’d to be the Word of God.--- But is it not evident to the simplest Reader, that Mr. *Ashton* is here reasoning upon a *Prophecy of Christ* ; upon a Prophecy which *necessarily must carry Conviction* with it ; upon a Relation determined to be the Relation of God ; and which, for that Reason, undeniably proves the future Existence of the Fact it relates. Does he not speak of *Jews* and *Christians*, having expected, and still expecting, the completion of the Promises made to them upon *this very Foot* ! Does he not instance in the *Prophecies of Christ* relating to his future

future Glory, and to the general Refurrection of Mankind! — And will this Gentleman have the Assurance to say that *these* were unprov'd Predictions? and, consequently, that Mr. *Ashton* is reasoning upon unprov'd Prediction? I cannot, therefore, but conclude that if this is an *honest* and *fair* Representation of the Case, there can be no such thing in Argument, as a *dishonest* and *unfair* Representation!

P. 40. His next Observation is to bolt the Matter to the Bran. — “ The sum of his Reasoning is, “ that Prediction is necessary, and a Miracle to “ prove the Prediction to be the Word of “ God; and, as both are equally necessary, one “ cannot be preferr'd to the other.” — And this he calls afterwards, “ A *summary* State of the “ Case.” That this is not the sum of Mr. *Ashton's* Reasoning, and that this is nothing like a State of the Case, I will shew hereafter; that he argues falsely from it if it were, I will now shew. He proceeds, then, ---- “ It is acknowledg'd by P. 36. “ Mr. *Ashton*, that though one necessary Part “ cannot be preferr'd to the other as an Evidence, yet both together complete the Evidence. Indeed neither one nor the other, separately, are any Assurance at all; and as he “ justly says, they make together but one Proof. “ If so, and St. *Peter* did intend, by Prophecy, “ not Prediction only, but *Prediction by the Word of God*, the Evidence arising from *such* Prophecy, is more sure than that of Miracle “ alone.”

It is allow'd, and was never, that I know of, deny'd, or doubted, that St. *Peter* means Prediction by the Word of God; but I say, that the Evidence arising from *such* Prophecy, *may not* be more sure than that of Miracle alone; though that be confess'd to be *no Assurance at all* ----- because

cause *such* Prophecy, or Prediction by the Word of God, *may itself* be no Assurance at all! Was not the Word of Prophecy to *Gideon*, Prediction by the Word of God ----- and was it, notwithstanding that, consider'd by *Gideon* as any Assurance! If it was, why did he desire to have it made sure by the Miracles? Was it consider'd by God himself as any Assurance? If it was, why did he comply with the request of *Gideon*, and make it sure by the addition of Miracles! But we will suppose that he means not Prediction only by the Word of God, but Prediction *prov'd* to be his Word ---- which, however, a Person of his Sagacity could not but see, are *very different* Things. For we perceive clearly in these Instances of *Gideon* (and the Case is the same in all other Instances of Prophecy) that Prediction, even by the Word of God, is no Authority 'till it has been *prov'd* by Miracles to be so. ---- If so, then, and St. *Peter* did intend by Prophecy, Prediction *prov'd* to be the Word of God, what does this Gentleman say will follow? Hear, ye Logicians, and admire! Listen, ye Critics, and be amaz'd! It follows, "That the Evidence arising from such Prophecy is more sure than — *that which has no Assurance at all!*" And he adds, "That one may with as much Propriety be compar'd to *the other*, as the *whole* to a *Part*." That is, "That that which is a very good Proof, may properly be said to be a *stronger* Proof, than that which *proves nothing*."

P. 37.

Allow me once more to illustrate a Matter, which needs no Confutation, by another entertaining and instructive Harangue, which I will suppose this Gentleman to hold forth to the great Person whose Title, so elegantly dispos'd through every Page, is not one of the least Ornaments to his

vide supr.
p. 11.

his Epistle. " To make this Point quite clear to
 " your Lordship (our Critic begins with saying)
 " let us take it, my Lord, in this convincing
 " Light. The Roads on every side of the
 " Town are so infested with Ruffians, that your
 " Lordship can hardly take the Air securely
 " without Arms and Ammunition. Now it will
 " be readily acknowledg'd by your Lordship,
 " that a *Blunderbuss* is of itself *no manner of Se-*
 " *curity*, unless you take care to charge it with
 " *Powder and Ball* — neither is the *Powder* and
 " *Ball* capable of *doing any Execution*, unless
 " you have it fitly inclos'd in the *Blunderbuss*.
 " But *both together*, are a very good *Security* :
 " And your Lordship will allow the *justness of*
 " *the Comparison* when I say, " That your *Blun-*
 " *derbuss*, when it is charg'd with *Powder* and
 " *Ball*, is a *more sure* Method of Defence, than
 " you could have from carrying the *Powder* and
 " *Ball* alone." Thus ends the Critic ! I hear
 his Lordship make no Reply ; but, methinks, I
 see him *smile* again !

Thus, my Friend, if the Bishop of *London's*
 Meaning be, really, what it is here represented to
 be, " That St. *Peter compares* and *prefers* Pro-
 " phecy as a Proof to a Miracle, which is *no*
 " *Proof* ;" and if one of those two Things, as we
 are told, must follow, either that this Gentleman
 is *much mistaken*, or that *this is possible* to be a
 true Account of the Passage : I fear we shall be
 oblig'd to take the *former Part* of the Alternative.
 --- Because it seems more probable that any Man,
 who is directed merely by his own fallible Rea-
 son, may be *very much mistaken*, than that one
 who was under the immediate Influence of the
 Spirit itself of Wisdom, could say, " That the
 confess'd Word of God is a *better Proof* than
 something which is *not a Proof* ; that is, *than no-*
thing !

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The Paragraph which follows, is so crouded P. 39.
 with ingenious Observations, that, in order to do them Justice, I must be oblig'd to remark upon each separately. The first, that differs from what has been already said upon the Subject, is, "That
 " a *Hymn*, as well as a *future Event*, when deliver'd under Inspiration, is, in the Scriptural
 " Sense, Prophecy." Be it so. Let this Gentleman select any one (for there is variety) from the sacred Books: whether he be struck with the Song of *Moses*; or if that of *Deborah* delight him more; or any other of the Songs of *Sion*! Will he rather choose to descend into the History of the second Covenant? and, smit with the love of sacred Song, be in Raptures with the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, the *Nunc Dimittis*, or the *Angelic Chorus*! What will any, or all, of these do for him *as a Proof*, unless they contain the Relation of some *future Event*? Will he produce them to *prove* to the *Conquerors* the *Victories* they are celebrating? Or to the *Favour'd* the *Blessings*, which fill their Hearts, and make their Lips overflow with Praise! For I must call to his Remembrance that the whole Debate is concerning Prophecy consider'd *as a Proof*, which it can only be to Mankind, as it is a Relation of Things which are not known to Men. And one might have hop'd, that this Description of Prophecy might have escap'd Censure, since *God himself* has been pleas'd to give a Sanction to it, when he considers *the Relation of future Events* to be such a Proof of his Interposition, as to be, of all others, the most unexceptionable to Men. — For he calls upon the whole Craft of idolatrous Priests, with the help of all their Idols, *to shew Men Things to come*!

If the Sense then, on which Mr. *Ashton* reasons on Prophecy, be a *vulgar Sense*; a Sense which

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cannot

cannot go down with one of so refin'd a Taste; he may comfort himself a little with the Example of two excellent Prelates of our Church; he may be entirely safe under the Authority of God himself, and shelter'd from Criticism *under the Shadow of his Wings!*

Ibid.

The next is, "That all the Communications " from the Deity to Mankind, even where a Miracle is wrought, and a Declaration made, that " the immediate Intention of it is to assure them " of one particular Point, are by Prophecy; " and *Miracle* has *no more to do* but to authenticate *the Prophecy*, and prove that the Communication is from God." Now let any Man who knows what *Sense* and *Consistency*, is, judge betwixt us, if this single Sentence be not loaded with Absurdities so great, as bring a *Disgrace* (to borrow this Gentleman's easy Phrase) *on any Solution which depends thereon.*

The first Information we receive is, "That " *Miracle* has *no more to do* but to authenticate " the Prophecy." And is not that enough? What, in the Name of Wonder, would one have all the Miracles in the World *to do more!* than to give to Prophecy *all the Authority* it has, and make that a *Proof* which *was none*, which *could have been none*, without it!

P. 30.

Again: by *Miracle* we are to understand, as we were inform'd with great Parade, the Gift or communicated Power of working Miracles.— And how far this Gift or Power is able to do this, may be seen by considering what any natural Gift or Power, which is communicated by God to Man, does shew. What does the Power of walking, for instance, shew, when the Person in whom it inheres sits still? or the Gift, or communicated Power of Speech, when the Man, to whom it is communicated, does not open his Mouth?

Mouth? Just so much, and no more, does, and can, the Gift or communicated Power of working Miracles, shew before *a Miracle* or *Miracles*, is, or are, wrought in virtue of that Power. So that this Gentleman may now discover, in Practice, the great use of his nice Distinction between *Miracle* as the communicated Power and *a Miracle* or *Miracles*, as the Effects of that Power, which has led him, unfortunately, to impute that, the authenticity of Prophecy, to the Power *itself*, which can only arise from the *exertion* of that Power. Things evidently, as *different*, in themselves-----as the *Organs* of Speech from the *Act* of speaking! as *Legs* from *walking*, or *Wings* from *flying*!

And, what is worst of all, he is now fallen headlong into the Pit, which he had been so artfully contriving for another! For if his own Reasoning against Mr. *Ashton*, have any Sense, or Force in it, it now turns full upon himself, and will prove by his own Medium, that he is speaking, here, of what he disclaims as nothing to the Purpose, *unprov'd* Perdition! For, “let me ask
 “his Lordship now, what is here meant by *the*
 “*Prophecy*, which *Miracle* is to authenticate? A
 “*bare* Prediction, *unprov'd* to be the Word of
 “God? Or a Prediction, *prov'd* to be his
 “Word? There can be no doubt. Write in-
 “stead of, *Miracle has nothing more to do than to*
 “*authenticate* the Prophecy; *Miracle has nothing*
 “*more to do but to authenticate a Prediction*
 “*prov'd to be the Word of God*—and, *Miracle*
 “*has nothing more to do but to authenti-*
 “*cate a Prediction* not *prov'd to be the Word of*
 “*God*—and from the Sense of one, and the
 “Nonsense of the other, 'tis plain that Prophe-
 “cy, here, means *a Prediction unprov'd*! From
 “which to *Prediction prov'd*, “this Gentleman

P. 32.

has peremptorily asserted, " That there can be
 " no Reasoning ! "

P. 40.

But he goes on : " The Miracle of the Glo-
 " rification affords *some* Hopes of Christ's future
 " Coming ; that of the Resurrection *much*
 " *greater*. But it is from the express Prophecies
 " relating thereto, that we are *sure* of it. And can
 " it be denied, that the Assurance a Christian
 " has of this is much greater from these than
 " from the Transactions on the Mount ? If it
 " can, let me ask, supposing there were no
 " Prophecies, no Declaration in the sacred Books
 " relating to this ; would that Miracle afford
 " him as strong, and as rational Hopes of it, as
 " he now has ? If not, then his Hopes are
 " founded *more* on the one than on the other,
 " and the Evidence from the Prophecies is
 " *greater* than from the Miracle ; and surely a
 " *greater* will admit of a Comparison with a
 " *less* ! "

In answer to this, I say, That the Miracle
 of the Glorification could not afford *any* Hope,
much less could that of the Resurrection, of
 Christ's Coming again in *Glory* (from any Cir-
 cumstance of, suppos'd, Similitude, in the Mira-
 cles, to that Event) if there were *no Declaration*
 in the sacred Books relating to his Coming in
Glory. The *Assurance* that a Christian would
 have of this from the Transactions in the Mount,
 abstracted from the Doctrine, would, as has been
 before agreed between us, be *none at all*. The
 Miracle would afford *no Hope* ! So that we are
 only running *about it*, and *about it*, without ad-
 vancing one Step in the Matter. Let me put
 the Case *as it is*, and you shall draw your own
 Conclusion ; which, with a very little variation,
 will serve again. I allow, then, that a Christi-
 an's Hopes may be very well founded upon Pro-
 phecies

phacies supported by Miracles, and that they can have *no* Foundation in *this*, or any other Miracle, *alone*. It is confess'd that the Evidence from Prophecies, would, in this Case, be a *Good* one;—the Evidence from the Miracle would be *none*. But, surely, a *good Evidence* will not admit of a Comparison with *no Evidence*, 'till it be proper to say, “ That a *Thousand* is a larger Number than a “ *Cypher* ! ”

To explain myself on this Point, you will allow me, after the manner of this Gentleman, to extract a few Lines relating to *this very Miracle*, from a Manuscript, *as it is near at hand*, which was written at a time when it seem'd to me to have more Strefs laid upon it than it was, of itself, able to bear. — After that, I will attempt to represent *fairly* to you the State of the Case, as it stands in the Apostle, which will, of itself, lead us to distinguish what is conclusive Argument, from what is *vague Harangue* !

P. 91.

“ Does not every Child see, that if *this Mira-*
 “ *cle* was wrought in Confirmation of the Pro-
 “ phacies, it is an *incontestable Proof* of their
 “ Truth, a *direct* and *explicit* one; if it was not
 “ wrought to confirm them, it has no kind of
 “ relation to them, *as a Proof*; nor can afford
 “ even the *slightest Probability* of their Accom-
 “ plishment. A Miracle is an undeniable Proof
 “ that God interposes, where the Occasion and
 “ Circumstances are such as give reason to expect
 “ his Interposition; but when we attempt to go
 “ farther than this, and argue from any *particu-*
 “ *lar manner* of his manifesting that Interposi-
 “ tion, to some *particular Event*, which he has
 “ *not* assign'd, I am afraid, we incur the Cen-
 “ sure of those who would be *wise above what is*
 “ *written*; and are only pursuing our *own*

2 Cor.
iii. 7.

“ *Reveries* without getting the least in sight into
 “ *the Divine Intention!* If this *kind* of reasoning
 “ had *any Force*, the People of *Israel* might have
 “ form’d to themselves *some Expectation* of their
 “ great Lawgiver’s *Coming again in Glory*, after
 “ they had seen him *so wonderfully glorified*, that
 “ they could not stedfastly behold his Face for
 “ *the Glory* of his Countenance. I say, one
 “ might have expected, if there had been *any*
 “ *Force* in this *sort* of Reasoning, That they
 “ might have formed to themselves *some Expec-*
 “ *tation* of such an Event as this: because
 “ though the Ministration engraven in Stones
 “ was *glorious*, I allow that the Ministration of
 “ Righteousness doth *much more exceed in Glory*:
 “ but if *this shews abundantly the Certainty*, and,
 “ *you could almost persuade yourself to say, the ac-*
 “ *tuality* of Christ’s *Coming again in Glory*,
 “ *independently* of the Prophecies concerning it,
 “ surely *the other* might afford some *faint Ray*
 “ of Probability, some *glimmering* of a Hope of
 “ the Return of *that Man* in Glory, whose very
 “ Name they idoliz’d, I had almost said, and
 “ ador’d, next to that of the God whose Com-
 “ mission he had born.

“ If this Reasoning had *any Force*, what
 “ might we not infer from the Histories of
 “ *Enoch?* of *Elijah?* of *him* who first resisted
 “ unto Blood for the Cause of Christian Truth?
 “ whose last Sun set so bright, that they who
 “ stood by saw his Face as if it had been the
 “ *Face of an Angel?*

“ These were all, in their Degrees, *wondrous*
 “ Displays of Glory with which God was
 “ pleas’d at different times, and in different
 “ ways, to distinguish his faithful Servants:
 “ Sufficient *any of ’em*, singly, to confirm any
 Decla-

“ Declaration *be shall*, have vouchsafed to, *have*
 “ made ; incapable *all of 'em*, together, to de-
 “ monstrate the Certainty of any thing, the
 “ Credit of which *he has not* been pleas'd to rest
 “ upon 'em.

“ Either make the Miracle, therefore, a *direct*
 “ and *explicit* Proof of the Veracity, as you say,
 “ of the Prophets ; or confess it to be *no Proof*
 “ at all of their Veracity. I own, I can see no
 “ Medium. It will prove beyond Controversy
 “ whatever *God intended* it should prove : and
 “ you must shew me your Credential when you
 “ presume to produce it as a Proof of *more !*”
 Again, “ When you ask what if we, also,
 “ consider the Miracle and Prophecies as *two*
 “ distinct *Proofs* ? You have forgot, I fear,
 “ that we may be call'd upon to know by *what*
 “ *Authority* we do what we please with these
 “ Prophecies, and with this Miracle : Are we
 “ not talking wildly, all the while, as if we
 “ were the Inventors of these things, and had
 “ a Patent to dispose of 'em at pleasure ! Re-
 “ gardless, in the mean time, that they are the
 “ Works of *another Author*, and of one whose
 “ Prerogative it is dangerous to invade ! We
 “ may find ourselves miserably mistaken if we
 “ fancy that we can produce the wonderful
 “ Works which have been wrought by Provi-
 “ dence for *real* and *certain Ends*, as Proofs of
 “ *all our Imaginations*. If we can find out what
 “ they were *intended* to prove, we may be very
 “ sure they will prove *that sufficiently* ; I know
 “ no Assurance we can have that they will prove
 “ *any thing else at all !*”

Let us, now, see what is the *real State* of the
 Case : And to clear this Matter, let us, as we
 are well directed in the Discourses, “ Confi-

P. 13.

“ der *what* it is that St. Peter intended to *prove* ;
 “ for without knowing this 'tis *impossible* to
 “ judge of the Comparison in the Text : For in
 “ *some Cases* Prophecy is *no Proof*.” Hear,
 then, the Words of St. Peter, “ We have
 “ *not follow'd cunningly-devised Fables*, when we
 “ *made known unto you the Power and Coming of*
 “ *our Lord Jesus Christ*.” The Question here, is,
 “ Whether this Declaration, or Doctrine, of the
 “ Apostles, *That Christ will come in Power*,” be
 a true Declaration, or a *Fiction*, and an *artful*
Tale. Now this Declaration, or Doctrine, call
 it what you will, of Christ's Coming in Power,
 is *nothing else* but *his own Prophecies* concerning
 that Coming ; or in this Gentleman's accurate
 Terms, the “ *Express Prophecies relating thereto*.”
 The very *Doubt*, then, is concerning the *Com-*
pletion of Christ's Prophecies relative to this Point ;
 and therefore the *Prophecies themselves* can, hard-
 ly, be produc'd, as any Argument, much less,
 as the most convincing Argument for *their own*
Completion. If this could have been done,
 St. Peter's best way to *confirm* the Truth of his
 Declaration, had been *barely to repeat it*. But I
 suppose, no Man, *except this Gentleman*, could
 ever dream of offering the Doctrine, *i. e.* the
 Prophecy itself, as the strongest Proof of it-
 self ! And that is, in fact, the Case, if the
 Prophecies of Christ relating to his Coming in
 Power, be suppos'd to be, and urg'd, as being,
 the strongest Proof of the Doctrine which he,
 and his Disciples from him, taught of that
 Coming. This, I presume, is one of the
 Cases in which Prophecy is so far from being
the best, that it can be *no Proof*, because the
 Truth of the Prophecy is the very thing to be
 prov'd !

It is ridiculous to suppose the Prophecies away where the Doctrine, which is nothing but the Repetition of those Prophecies, is taught; which is the Case here. Nor can any one suppose that when an Apostle applies one Miracle, for a particular and very evident Reason, to the Confirmation of any Doctrine contain'd in a Prophecy, that he excludes, though he does not express, the general Evidence arising from any other, or all the other, Miracles which have not that particular Reference to the point he proposes to establish. The first Argument then made use of by St. *Peter* I conceive to be "That the Doctrine, or Prophecies of Christ's Coming *in Glory*, resting upon the particular Evidence of *one* Miracle, as to the *manner*, as well as upon the general Credit of *all*, as to the *Certainty*, of its Accomplishment, affords a sufficient ground of Hope and Consolation to Christians in all, but particularly in, Circumstances, of Distress. And the second Argument, according to this Gentleman, is no more than the *express Declaration* of that Event resting upon the *same* Evidence. When therefore this Author shall have convinc'd his noble Correspondent, "That his Lordship's Coach and Six Horses are a *better* Conveyance than his Six Horses and a Coach; then, but not till then, I will also be convinc'd that St. *Peter* could say, "That Prophecies supported by all the Miracles recorded in the History of the Gospel are a *surer* Evidence of their own Accomplishment, than the *same* Miracles supporting the *same* Prophecies."

This single Consideration will supply us with a full and direct Answer to all that Mr. *Jackson* and Mr. *Whitaker* have advanc'd on this head. And as these two Gentlemen have propos'd what they had to offer with great Decency, and with
some

some appearance of Reason, I shall endeavour to follow their Example, implicitly, in one Instance, and come as little short of it as I am able in the other.

Note p. 56 Mr. *Whitaker* is of Opinion, " That although
 " *St. Peter* prefers not Prophecy to Miracles in
 " *general*, yet he certainly prefers Prophecy as a
 " surer Argument for the purpose he had in
 " view, than the particular Miracle in the Mount."
 " And I do not see, he adds, that Mr. *Ashton*
 P. 32. " has prov'd any thing to the contrary."

Now the anonymous Author of the Essay allows,
 " That if Mr. *Ashton* has prov'd this in *general*
 " of any Prophecy whatever, he has prov'd it of
 " *these particular* Prophecies and *this particular*
 " Miracle." I do not wonder, therefore, that
 Mr. *Whitaker* can find no one Argument in the
 Dissertation in support of a particular Case which
 was so clearly included in the general one; and
 which this Gentleman (who seems not dispos'd to
 make Concessions in favour of Mr. *Ashton*) has
allow'd to be so. But I am surpris'd that after
 it has been prov'd that Prophecy is not a better
 Proof of any thing than *any* Miracle, Mr. *Whit-*
aker should think it necessary to prove that it
 cannot be a better Proof than this, or that, or any
 particular Miracle. Suppose, for instance, that
 Mr. *Whitaker* had asserted that five Shillings were
 not of *more value* than any Crown-piece, would
 he not think it strange in me, after I had *allow'd*
 this, to call upon him to shew that they were
 not of more value than *some one* Crown-piece
 which he carries in his Pocket!

P. 58. But Mr. *Whitaker's* " Scheme obliges him to
 " maintain and defend a Preference due to Pro-
 " phesy over the Miracle in the Mount." In
 the support of which, however, he thinks, " there
 " is

“ is so far from being any Necessity to suppose
 “ that the Miracle and Prophecy were brought
 “ to ascertain the *same* Point, that, he imagines,
 “ the Preference given to the latter is sufficiently
 “ accounted for, by supposing the Miracle *neither*
 “ brought to prove it, nor to be capable of
 “ proving it.”

P. 59.

Now I have always been us'd to think “ that
 a Comparison between any *two Things* is nothing
 else but an Expression of a Degree, more or less,
 of some Quality in *one* which is *positively* con-
 tain'd in *each* of the Subjects of Comparison.
 And wherever any thing is absolutely wanting in
 any respect, it is, in that respect, *nothing*; which
 having *no Degrees* can admit *no Ground* for Com-
 parison. No body, for example, ever said “ That
 a Body was *more substantial* than a Shadow. Or,
 “ That Light was *brighter* than Darknefs. Mr.
Whitaker, I am sure, would shake his Head at
 the Comparison if any one were absurd enough
 to say, “ That his Lady, if he has one, was *fairer*
 than an *African*; or ask, If Master was *older* than
 the *Child unborn*! That he himself reason'd *more*
closely than an *Idiot*, and his Parishioners were *bet-*
ter Christians than a Congregation of *Infidels*!

And is the Absurdity less to say, “ That Pro-
 phesy proves any point *better* than a Miracle,
 because the Miracle is *neither brought to prove it,*
nor capable of proving it? Or, “ That a Prophecy
 which is a good Proof of something, is a *better*
 Proof of that thing than a Miracle which is *no*
Proof at all of it?

Would any Man, in a Case not unlike this, I
 do not say *an Apostle*, but *any Man*, express him-
 self in this manner, to his Friend who was con-
 sulting him about the method of travelling from
London to *Paris*, or the *Hague*? A Post-Chaise
 will

will carry you *very well* to *Harwich* or *Dover*, but the Packet-boat will convey you *better* to *Calais* or *Helvoet* ! Or would Mr. *Whitaker* take it kindly, if, in asking the Road from *Kensington* to *Colnbrook*, he should be told there are two Roads ; you may go by *Richmond-Hill* or by *Hounslow-Heath*. When you are got to the top of the Hill you may see the Country towards *Colnbrook*, but the *Heath* is the better way, because you cannot go by *Richmond* without coming to the *Heath* at last !

Vide
Disc. 1.
P.23. 1 Ed.

And, indeed, if St. *Peter* had, in this place, intended to prove the Power of Christ, previously to the Proof of his Coming again in Power ; to take off the Prejudices which had arisen in the Opinion of the *Jews*, from his living and dying so meanly and miserably ; one should have thought he would have pitch'd upon some instance of it which had been *subsequent* to his Sufferings and Death ; especially as there are three of the most eminent that are recorded in the Gospel, that were so. But this, as Mr. *Whitaker* says, by

P.59. Not.

the by.
The point in question, and now to be determin'd, is this, " Whether was the Word of " Prophecy (so circumstanc'd as it stands propos'd to the Consideration of the Christians in " St. *Peter's* Argument, *i. e.* resting on the particular Evidence of one, and the general " Credit of all the Miracles) a *better* Proof of " Christ's Coming in Glory, than that one Miracle, not exclusive of the rest, supporting the " Word of Prophecy ! " This I take to be the *real state* of the Case, and from hence I conclude " That the second Argument being not *better*, as it is *no other* than the first, St. *Peter* could not possibly compare it with, and prefer it to the first.

Ibid.

Mr.

Mr. *Jackson* thinks, “ that Mr. *Ashton* has by P. 112.
 “ no means shew’d that there may not be made,
 “ in the Passage in Controversy, a Comparison
 “ between Prophecy and a Miracle in some par-
 “ ticular Circumstances, and a Superiority given
 “ to many Prophecies, some of ’em clear and
 “ circumstantial, over a single Miracle of itself
 “ *vague and undetermin’d.*”

Now we have already shewn, “ That St. *Pe-*
ter’s first Argument is, That the Doctrine of the
 Apostles, *i. e.* the Prophecies of Christ, relating
 to this particular Event of his Coming again in
 Power and Glory, receive *particular* Confirma-
 tion from this *single* Miracle, beside the *general*
 Authority deriv’d to them from *all the rest* ; P. 114.
 which Miracle, therefore, being thus *pinn’d down*,
 and expressly apply’d, by the Apostle, to the sup-
 port of the Doctrine contain’d in those Prophe-
 cies, will, I hope, no more be represented as a
vague and unapply’d Miracle. That the Prophe-
 cies, then, and this Miracle may, in this Case,
 be justly compar’d together, and the Superiority
 given to the former over the latter, is what this
 Gentleman and I are not agreed in. For this
 Reason, barely, “ That as St. *Peter*, in one Sen-
 tence, confirms the Prophecies by the Miracle, he
 cannot, in the next, assure us that the Prophecies
 are a *better* Evidence than the Miracle. Let the
 Prophecies be as clear and circumstantial as you
 please, let ’em assert as plainly and describe as
 particularly, as you will, the Event they are pro-
 duc’d to prove, the Apostle could not suppose,
 or say, that they were a better Evidence of their
 own Truth, than a Miracle which he applies to
 support the Truth of ’em.

And though this Gentleman is pleas’d to add, P. 115.
 “ That Mr. *Ashton’s* Assertion, That the Pro-
 “ phesy

“ phesy of the Text could not be the Prophecy
 “ of Christ himself rests upon no *solid* Reason,”
 “ yet if he will please to take the *real state of the*
Case along with him, he may perhaps find some-
 thing in it not so easy to digest as he imagines.

— & fragili quærens illidere dentem,
 Offendat solido !

P. 115. When he may chance to find that the Opposi-
 tion will not be of one *vague* and *unapply'd*
 Miracle to the prophetic Credit of *Jesus* rais'd
 on *all* his Miracles ; but between certain Pro-
 phecies resting on *all* the Miracles, and the *same*
 Prophecies resting upon the *same* Evidence. And
 thus the Objection made by Mr. *Ashton* to the
 Comparison, may, perhaps, be found to stand
 unimpeach'd by any thing this Gentleman has
 offer'd against it.

Having thus endeavour'd to shew that the Im-
 propriety of the Comparison between Miracle
 and Prophecy, in any view, in this instance, is
 made more apparent by the manner in which
 these Gentlemen have attempted to evade it.
 I shall,

IV. Remove some other Objections to Mr. *Ashton's*
 Interpretation, and offer some Considera-
 tions to confirm the Probability of its Truth.

Essay,
 P. 44, 45,
 46.

Objection 1. “ In the first Paragraph the whole
 “ controverted Passage is made to rise out
 “ of and be intended as a Support against
 “ what there is not one Word in the whole
 “ Epistle. The Apostle, in the Dissertation, be-
 “ gins with saying, *I confess your Afflictions are*
 “ *great*, but the Apostle, in the Epistle, has not
 “ a Syllable about Afflictions from the beginning
 “ to

“ to this place. Nor can it be said that the
 “ Apostle was led to set before ’em the *Evidences*
 “ of *their Hopes*, in order to fortify their Minds
 “ against the Prospect of Persecution, as this
 “ was the *end* of the Epistle, and he might have
 “ that end in view, in this place, though there
 “ is no express mention of it. For though this
 “ is *part of the end of the First Epistle*, and the
 “ supporting Prospect is frequently *beld out*
 “ therein to that purpose, it does not appear to
 “ have been *at all the end of the Second*, as no
 “ mention is made of it through the whole. Nor
 “ does the Apostle, after having done what *was*
 “ the *Design of the Epistle to do*, to *defend the*
 “ *Doctrine of Christ’s future Coming against the*
 “ *false Teachers*, apply the Doctrine to the Sup-
 “ port under Persecution, but to the same In-
 “ tegrity of Life and Manners he had been re-
 “ minding them of in the begining of the Epistle.
 “ Thus the *Propriety* of setting to view the *Evi-*
 “ *dences of the Hopes* of a Christian, in order to
 “ support him under the most trying Duty,
 “ which would lead us to admit that those Evi-
 “ dences were, *in fact*, here set to view, will be
 “ *none*, when it appears that that Duty was not
 “ then in the Apostle’s Thoughts.”

Answer. It is evident to demonstration, and
 allow’d by this Gentleman, that the Apostle is de-
 fending the same Doctrine in his Second Epistle,
 which he had been teaching in the First. Now
 whether the *Reasons* for his repeating that Doctrine
 were the same with, or *different* from, those which
 induc’d him, first, to *advance* it; or whether the
Inferences which he draws from it be *alike*, or *not*
 so, in the First Epistle and in the Second. Whe-
 ther he was apprehensive that the *Fear of Pain*,
 or

or the *Love of Pleasure*, might shake, or allure, 'em from their *Stedfastness*. Whether he exhort 'em to *Patience* or to *Piety*, to *suffer* like Men, *not without Hope*, or to *act* as such; I cannot see that it makes the *least difference* with respect to the *Propriety*, of his setting to view the *Evidences* of a Doctrine he thought proper to inculcate. Because so long as there is a *Necessity* for *teaching* a Doctrine, there, certainly, never can be the least *Impropriety* in *supporting* it!

Essay,
p. 46, 47,
48, 49.

Objection 2. “ Mr. *Ashton*’s Sense of the more
“ sure Word of Prophecy, is, That the Pro-
“ phecies of the Old Testament are *now*
“ become more sure than *before*; and the *Means*
“ by which they are become so, are, That the
“ *Nature* of that *glorious* Kingdom which was
“ foretold in them was *explain’d* by the Spirit of
“ God. Now in the Apostle’s Words there is
“ not any thing either of *That* in respect of
“ which the Comparison is made, of the Word
“ of Prophecy being *now* surer than *before*, or
“ of the *Means* by which it is become surer;
“ which had this been the meaning of the Apostle,
“ never, surely, could have been the case.
“ Mr. *Ashton* declares, That he does not see
“ how the Apostle could have express’d that
“ meaning in a clearer manner than he has done
“ here: Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιώτερον του προφητικὸν
“ λόγον. Τὸτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, that is,
“ as plain as Words can make it. If we take
“ this first into consideration we have a stronger
“ Argument from our Prophets. Now what is
“ this that is to be taken *first* into Consideration?
“ That no Prophecy of Scripture is of private
“ Interpretation. But is there not still here a
“ Chasm in the Sense? Are there not wanting
to

p. 48.

“ to fill up and preserve Connexion, *two Things?*
 “ Besides, the plainness of this depends upon the
 “ plainness that the *προγενέστερον* refers to, *We*
 “ *have a more sure Word*; which it cannot do,
 “ unless the intermediate Sentence be flung into
 “ a Parenthesis, as Mr. *Ashton*, indeed, has done
 “ in his Translation, but *without the Authority of*
 “ *one Edition, that I know of, to countenance it.*
 “ All this consider’d, do you not think, my
 “ Lord, that ἡ δὲ βεβαιότερον ἢ πρὶν, would have
 “ been plainer; and that St. *Peter*, if he *intended*
 “ this, would have *express’d* this in those, or some
 “ such Words?

Answer. That the Comparative, singly, does
express, sufficiently, all that is *express’d* in the
 Words which this Gentleman would supply for
 the Apostle, if the common use of Words, of
 that kind, in *all Languages* did not abundantly
 shew, the Judgment of the *Greek Commentators*,
 through whose hands we receive *this part* of
 Mr. *Ashton’s* Interpretation, must be allow’d to
 be decisive, for its doing so, in *that Language*.
 And if those who wrote in the *Greek Tongue*
 found nothing of Difficulty in this, I know not
 by what Authority this Gentleman can *object* to
 an Explication which was first *advanc’d* by
 them.

So much for *that* in respect of which the Com-
 parison is made: With regard to the *means*, I
 did not expect from *this Gentleman* any Objection
 to a *Parenthesis*, where the Words so *naturally*
 resolve themselves into one as these do; (unless
 indeed this be not *long* enough to give full scope
 to his Imagination): And, as to the *two Things*
 that are wanting; if an Apostle assures me *ex-*
pressly that a certain Consideration will *supply* me

with a Reason for what he has said, and I find, *in fact*, that it will do so, I cannot conceive it to be any reasonable ground of Complaint that I am obliged to cast about for the *Means* by which that *Reason* is to be supply'd.

Survey,
p. 24. Not.

Objection 3. " Whatever Reasons may seem to countenance Mr. *Ashton's* Opinion, St. Peter, I apprehend, will scarce agree to this Interpretation of his meaning, as the Context seems strongly to remonstrate against it. Had he intended that the *more sure Word* should have been understood in the sense contended for by this Author, it seems not very likely that he would have explain'd himself as he does in the following part of the Verse. For can it be thought that the Apostle would have denied the Word of Prophecy the Advantage of *so slender* a Metaphor as that of *Twilight*, if his Argument had been intended to turn upon any extraordinary Illustration which Prophecy had lately receiv'd from the Explanations and Dilucidations of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, as far as appears, it was in full as involv'd a State as ever it was, not having yet receiv'd the *dim Eclaircissement* of even a *crepuscular Dawn*. For he exhorts them to attend to it, as unto a *Light shining in a dark Place*, until the *Day dawn*.

" And so Mr. *Ashton* himself is forc'd to explain it, when he comes to *shape* his Interpretation. *You see these Things now only, as it were*, through a Glass, darkly, and at a distance; enough to discover the *reality* of their Existence, too indistinctly to form any precise Notion of the *manner* of it." " But to what purpose, then, were those things better explain'd?

" or

“ or in *what sense* could they be *better understood*
 “ than they were before? or how was the *Nature*
 “ of that Kingdom made known to 'em as
 “ this Author supposes? ”

Answer. Though Mr. *Whitaker* and I do not know the particular Constitution of the Kingdom of Christ, which it hath *not enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive*, yet we know that it will be *very different* from any *earthly* Constitution; which is more than the *Jewish* Nation did know, before Christ himself, by the Holy Spirit of God, was pleas'd to give 'em that Information; and more than they were willing to believe, after they were inform'd of it. And, *what excellent Purposes* were answer'd by *that Discovery*, I need not tell Mr. *Whitaker*. Nor will he ask, any more, in *what sense* the old Prophecies relating to it were *better understood* than they had been before that Light was struck in upon 'em; or how the *Nature* of it was made, negatively, known! And yet we must still view it through the Eye of *Faith*, not of *Sight*, till the *Day dawn*, and the *Day-star arise in our Hearts*.

Objection 4. and Answer. With respect to a more early or later Coming of Christ, I shall need to say less at present, because one of the Gentlemen *agrees entirely* with Mr. *Ashton* on that head; and is *so far from objecting*, that he *thanks him* for what he has said *against a speedier* Coming being intended there. And another has observ'd that *the earlier* Coming of Christ would have serv'd Mr. *Ashton's* Purpose *as well*, or *better* than the latest.

Essay, p 54

Reply,
P. 117.

Only let me observe, That there does not seem to be so much reason, as is imagin'd, from

Mat. xxiv.
3.

ver. 32,
33, 34.

Christ's Prophecy concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, to expect *any Coming* of his *at that time*. The Circumstances which preceded, or attended that Event, and the Event itself, are consider'd barely as *Signs* of that Coming, that is, as *previous Assurances* of the Certainty of a Fact which was *not yet to take place*. When *all these things* were seen to have come to pass, the great Object of their Expectation is still represented to be at the same *distance* (to compare earthly things with heav'nly) as the *Summer* is, when the tender Buds stand at the Door of Life, in the *first Appearance* of the *Spring*.

Reply,
p. 113.

Objection 5. The Author of the Dissertation says, that Christ's Promise, "That some of his Disciples should not taste of Death till they saw him coming in his Kingdom," was made good eight Days after, when Christ was transfigur'd before 'em. Flat! and unbecoming the Gravity of the divine Speaker! what! introduce with so much solemnity — I tell you of a Truth that some of you shall live eight Days longer, and then see an Emblem of Christ's Glory, in the Transfiguration of my Person *on a Mountain*? Sure this could not be the sense of the Speech. The Event our Saviour ascertains to be his Coming again in Glory at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and this Event he pins down to the Life-time of some of the Hearers, when he says, "*This Generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfill'd.*"

Mat. xxiv.
ver. 2.

Answer. It is very certain that the Expression "*all these things,*" on which this Gentleman builds so much, relates, in one place, barely, to the Buildings of the Temple; and though it does seem

seem to stretch its Comprehension in proportion as the Incidents arise, yet if the whole of those Incidents are (as they seem to be) consider'd *only as Signs* of that Coming, the Event itself cannot be included in it, in any place.

It is not pretended, that I know of, that more than *one* of the Persons, then present, did survive the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. But the promise of *seeing him come* in his Kingdom extends to *more* than one.

It does not seem to be unbecoming the Dignity, or different from the usual manner, of the divine Speaker, to express himself *indeterminately* concerning the *Times* and Seasons of what he foretells. Nor can I think that the Solemnity with which it is introduc'd, exceeds the Importance of the Occasion, till I am inform'd at *what other time* the Disciples of Christ did ever behold a *more illustrious Display of his Glory, of his Glory as of the only-begotten of the Father!*

John i.
ver. 14.

And if the Mountain offend this Gentleman, he may recollect who has promis'd, *Yet will I set my King upon my Holy Hill of Sion!*

Objection 6. and Answer. The *Fitness* of the Miracles in the Mount to prove the Doctrine of Christ's *future Kingdom*, as propos'd to his Disciples by the Apostle, is the last Point I shall argue with the Author of the Essay; in support of which, some Considerations will arise which seem to me to confirm the Interpretation offer'd by Mr. *Ashton*. This point is, much at large, and very minutely, discuss'd from the 50th to the 83d Page of that Treatise; and, as he is ready to rest the *whole* of the Argument upon it, I agree with his Proposal entirely, and am content to put it upon *that issue*. I cannot promise you that I shall ring the Changes upon

P. 41.

that Subject for so *long* a time, and with so much Dexterity as he can do; but I hope I may venture to assure you that I will not handle it with *less* Perspicuity than he has done.

Now, though every particular Doctrine of Christianity receives a *general* Sanction, as divine, from the concurrent Force of every Miracle wrought in attestation of the Divinity of that Dispensation; yet if God has been pleas'd, in some distinguish'd Instance, in kind Condescension to the early and inveterate Prejudices of Men, to *add* to this *common* Evidence, *one special* Effort of his Power, which shall bear a visible relation to the point in view; leading them, as it were, by the Hand, into a Persuasion of the Doctrine which is most averse to their Prepossessions, by enabling them to *see*, in some degree, what he requires them to *believe*; I presume the Proof of the Truth of any Doctrine will not be consider'd, by this Gentleman, as *less conclusive*, on account of such an *additional Confirmation*. And *such* a Proof as this, I propose to shew the Miracle of Christ's Glorification to have been; by evincing,

First, That this Miracle was *originally wrought* in Confirmation of the Doctrine which is taught in the Epistles of St. Peter.

Secondly, That it does bear a particular and *evident relation* to that Doctrine.

Disc. 1.
p. 23.

1. As it is the *natural*, and indeed the *only* Sense of the Passage, allow'd expressly by the Bishop of London, and *confirm'd*, beyond a possibility of doubt, by the inconclusiveness of all that this Gentleman has *said against it*, I will take

take it for granted "That the Miracles on the Mount are introduc'd by the Apostle to *prove his Point*." And this Gentleman will allow me, "That St. Peter, under Inspiration, could not possibly make use of *Means* insufficient to his *End*:" i. e. "Could not possibly offer a Miracle as a *Proof* of that of which it is *no Proof*." But, I apprehend, that no Miracle can prove any Point, nor can be apply'd, consequently, by an Apostle, as a *Means sufficient*, to the Proof of any, *but that* which it was originally *intended*, and directly *wrought*, to prove. From whence I infer, "That the Miracles on the Mount, as they are *particularly apply'd* by the Apostle to the Proof of his Point, were originally wrought to ascertain the Point, to the Proof of which he applies 'em.

If Mr. *Ashton* was too sanguine in laying this down as a *Postulatum*, I acknowledge my Obligation to this Author for having taught me to express myself with more Circumspection, by offering something *in proof* of it.

2. This Gentleman owns, "That *he doubts much* whether the Miracle of the Glorification was *intended* as any Proof at all of Christ's Coming in *future Glory*: And, as evident so ever as the *relation* it has to that Event is said to be, whether it has *any relation* to it in particular." Of the first of *his Doubts* we have already spoke, and are now coming to the second. And it will appear nothing new to me, how strange soever you may conceive it, if he should, in a Page or two, have *forgot* this doubt, and quietly give up the Point he is now so eagerly contesting. So, my Friend, you will find it: For in the 71st Page "He does not doubt but the Miracle of the Glorification is *relative* to Christ's *State of Glory* in some part of it, or

“ in the whole, but he can see but *one* Circum-
 “ stance in it similar, which is that of the *Glory*
 “ *itself*.” And who ever thought of seeing more?
 What is there wanting, beyond this Concession,
 to confirm all that Mr. *Ashton* proposes, and to
 put beyond Controversy all that this Gentleman
 is now disputing !

Dissert.
 p. 92.

p. 135.

ibid.

Does not Mr. *Ashton* consider this Miracle ex-
 pressly as “ wrought to ascertain the Futurity of
 Christ’s *Coming in Glory*,” as “ an indisputable
Earnest of his *glorious* Kingdom,” as “ a Proof,
 as conclusive as can be giv’n, of Christ’s Coming
 again *in Glory*,” as “ an Initiation and Investiture
 of Christ into his Kingdom of *Glory* ?”

It is *this* Circumstance of Christ’s *future* and
everlasting Kingdom which Mr. *Ashton* supposes
 to have been the main point which the Apostle
 endeavours to establish in his Epistles, in oppo-
 sition to a *more instant*, and *temporal* Kingdom,
 and *another* kind of *Glory*. And the Epistles seem
 to give *good ground* for the Supposition.

1 Ep. Pet.
 chap. i.
 ver. 4.
 ver. 7.

ver. 10,
 11, 12.

ver. 14.

The first, which contains the Doctrine of both,
 sets out with the grand Object of a Christian’s
 Hope, which is described to be *An Inheritance*
incorruptible, undefil’d, and that fadeth not away.
 The Disciples are excited to Constancy and Per-
 severance by the Prospect of Honor and *Glory*
 at the Appearance of Christ. They are referr’d
 to their *own* Prophets, as having taught the very
 Doctrine which was now press’d upon ’em con-
 cerning the *Glories* which were to succeed the
 Sufferings of Christ. And, in consequence of
 this, are exhorted to correct the *mistaken Notions*
 they had conceiv’d of ’em in *their Ignorance*;
 being now clearly inform’d that they were not
 redeem’d by *corruptible* Things, by *Silver* or
Gold, but by the *invaluable* Blood of Christ;
 whom

whom God had rais'd from the Dead, and to whom he had given *Glory*; as the Foundation of their *Faith* and *Hope*. They are reminded of their being begotten again, not of *corruptible* Seed, but of *incorruptible*, by *that Word* of God which *lives* and *continues* for ever. For that all *Flesh* is as *Grass*, and all *human Glory* as the *Flower of Grass*; the *Grass withereth*, and the *Flower of it is fallen*, but the *Word of God* remaineth for ever; and this, says the Apostle, *is the very Word that has been preach'd unto you*. From whence it appears that the *Doctrine* taught by the *Prophets*, explain'd and enforc'd by the *Apostles*, was of a *Glory* to be conferr'd on the *Servants of Christ*, as oppos'd to *Human Glory*!

ver. 18-21.

ver. 24, 25.

comp. with

ver. 12.

And this is confirm'd by the *Character* of the *False-Prophets* and their *Doctrine*: Who are describ'd (2. Ep. ch. ii. ver. 1.) as denying *the Lord* that had bought 'em: Which Description is more fully drawn ver. 10. where they are said to walk *after the Flesh* (comp. ver. 25. 1 ch. 1 Ep.) in the *Desires of Pollution*, ($\mu\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{\iota}$ in opposition to $\alpha\mu\iota\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\nu$ ver. 4. ch. 1. Ep. 1. and ver. 12. to perish in their own *Corruption* ($\phi\theta\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}$ oppos'd to $\alpha\phi\theta\alpha\rho\tau\omicron\nu$, *ibid.*) to despise the *Lordship* of *Christ* — being not afraid to blaspheme *his Glories*: ($\delta\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\varsigma$ comp. ver. 11. 1 ch. 1 Ep.) That they introduc'd *Heresies of Destruction*: bringing swift *Destruction* upon themselves. — That their *Destruction* did not slumber. — That *many* would follow their *Destructions*; upon whose Account the way of Truth would be *evil spoken of*. — They are represented as promising their Followers *Liberty*, while they themselves were enslav'd to *Corruption*; (ver. 19) as receiving the *Reward* of unrighteousness;

righteousness; esteeming it their *chief* Delight to riot in the Day-time; Spots and Blemishes! (σπίλοι καὶ μώμοι oppos'd to ἀσπίλοι καὶ ἀμόμω ver. 13.) as having a Heart exercis'd in *Covetousness*; deceiving those who had not fix'd their Minds in a *nobler* Expectation (ver. 14) as alluring through the Desires of the *Flesh* those who were quite escap'd from Men who live in *Error*; who had escap'd the *Pollutions* of the *World* (μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου) by the *Knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει oppos'd to ἀγνοίᾳ) ver. 20.

Chap. 1.
ver. 2.

Now it is clear that the Notion of a *Temporal* Kingdom, with which the Prospect of *present Pleasure* is so closely connected, was the *strong-bent* of the Profelytes from *Judaism*; the *principal Reason* why Christianity was *ill-spoken* of amongst the Nations; which drew many into *Error*; and, by making 'em uneasy, and obnoxious, to the Governments under which they liv'd, did lead 'em into *swift Destruction*. The *proper Remedy* for this Error was the *Knowledge* of the *Glory* of Christ, with which this second Epistle opens, and which is frequently repeated in the Course of it.

And this receives farther Confirmation from the *first* Instruction, press'd upon his Disciples, by the Apostle, in consequence of the *true Notion* of Christ's Kingdom, in the second Chapter of his first Epistle. *Dearly Beloved, I beseech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Spirit, having your Conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as Evil-Doers, they may, by seeing your good Works, glorify God; subdue, therefore, that contumacious and rebellious Spirit with which you are reproach'd, (as he goes on,)*
sub-

submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto your local and deputed Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the Punishment of Evil-Doers, but for the Praise of them that do well. For so is the Will of God that with well-doing ye may put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men; Men who know not of what Spirit your Religion consists, nor what glorious Hopes it proposes. As free, but not using your Liberty for a Cloke of Maliciousness; but as the Servants of God. Honour all Men, love the Brotherhood, fear God, honour the King. And he supports this Lesson in the next Chapter, by the Authority of the Psalmist. — He that will love Life and see good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they speak no Guile, let him eschew Evil, and do Good; let him seek Peace and ensue it. In Conformity to what had been, expressly, assur'd 'em by Christ himself, " That he that would save his Life should lose it, but he that was content to lose his Life should save it."

Chap. 2.

ver. 12.

— 17.

Add to this, " That in the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew, to which the main Lines of these Epistles of St. Peter evidently refer, our blessed Lord, himself, when he foretold the Coming of these False-Prophets, guarded his Disciples, particularly, against the Doctrine of an *Instant* Coming, and a *Temporal* Kingdom, which he foresaw and foretold, likewise, that they would teach; *If they say unto you, He is in the Desert, go not forth; in the secret Chambers; believe not:* and seems to glance at the *different* Glory with which he should appear, when he, thus, describes the Manner of his Appearance: " As the *Lightning* cometh out of the East, and
shineth

Mat. xxiv.

ver. 28.

compar'd

with 2 Pet.

chap. iii.

ver. 4.

shineth even unto the West, *so* shall, also, *the Coming of the Son of Man* be."

It appears, then, that the Miracle of the Glorification was, originally, wrought to confirm the Doctrine of which it is produc'd as a Proof by the Apostle. And this Doctrine appears to be the *Future* and *Celestial Glory* promis'd to the Followers of Christ, in opposition to a mistaken Notion of a more *immediate* and *temporal Glory*. To which Doctrine, as this Miracle bears a *visible Relation*, it is a *fit* Proof of it.

It is farther observable, That the Relation of this Miracle, in all the Evangelists, who record it, is introduc'd by a Discourse concerning Christ's Coming in the *Glory of his Father*; and that the Notion of *another kind of Glory* sat so deep in the Breasts of the *three* Disciples, who were admitted to this *glorious* Vision, that *two* of 'em were reprov'd, by their Master, for *not knowing* what they ask'd, when they desir'd to sit, one on his right Hand, and the other on his left, *in his Kingdom*; and the *third*, as having no Conception of the Things that be *of God*, but of those that be *of Man*. As no one Miracle, therefore, can be produc'd *so fit* to give

Eff. p. 83. Men true Impressions of the *Glory* of Christ, as that which is *one Instance* of it; as *this* Miracle is so circumstanc'd, with respect to the Apostle's Doctrine, as *no other* Miracle whatever, even the Resurrection or Ascension, is, it is not unreasonable, sure, to conclude, that it was *more fit*, than any other, for the Purpose to which it is assign'd by the Apostle; and, consequently, when added to the *general* Evidence of the Truth of all the Doctrines of Christ, is as conclusive a Proof of *this particular* one as can be giv'n.

Upon

Upon this Issue this Gentleman has been pleas'd to rest the whole of the Argument ; and on this Issue I leave it to rest.

His verbal Criticisms would take up a Treatise of themselves ; with which, if I should ever be unhappy enough (which God forbid) to find no better Employment, I may trouble you hereafter.

The Defence of Mr. *Cooke's* Interpretation I leave to him whose Learning all the World that knows him knows. And though I must confess that that learned Gentleman has no sooner giv'n it, but he seems to me to *repent* of it. Though, I think, he would have done better if he had left off at the 30th Page ; as he appears to write on, from thence, only to shew us that he is *dissatisfy'd* with what he has done ; and, after having vanquish'd all Opposition, and giv'n a *just* and *full* Deduction of the *clear* and *cogent* Argument, supported by the Context, coincident with the Tenor of the two Epistles ; after having remov'd the *only Bar* to it, by a *new* Translation ; and triumph'd and insulted over all his adversaries ; he falls back again into a state of great *Perplexity* and *Doubt*. He proposes a *new* Solution, in which, however, he does *not confide* ; but takes us aside, as it were, to tell us, *privately*, that, after all, he is sorry he has giv'n us so much trouble ; having discover'd, at last, that he had *nothing material* to observe concerning the subject he had *chosn to discuss*. Ess. not. p. 146.

Though this, I say, appears to me to be his Case, yet, possibly, when he can find leisure, from his regular Attendance on the Offices he so constantly performs, with as much Credit to himself, as Advantage to the Public, he may (with all that good Sense, and Modesty, and *terse* Ess. p. 3.

terse Expression which charms and suspends the Rage of Criticism itself) wipe off all these untoward Appearances, and shew that nothing is wanting, but the Apprehension of his Readers.

Essay, p. 1. You will now be glad to come to an end of this *idle Business*: And, I assure you, the greatest Pleasure I have in the recollection of having spent my time in this manner, is, that I have been doing, what you desir'd me to do.

ibid.

I am,

July 21,
1751.

Dear Sir,

Your Friend and Servant.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

- Page 5. line 17. read extraordinary for extraordinacy.*
p. 8. l. 4. dele fo.
p. 9. l. 6. dele well.
p. 11. l. 27. read tralatitious for traletitious.
p. 37. l. 31. read and for of.
p. 56. l. 15. read Companion for Comparison.
p. 60. l. 9. read his for this.
p. 68. l. 23. read neither for much less.

